Plant Seeds Anyway

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 August 2022

Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.!

Different examples given to us in this parable. And we've got a few words we've been using the last couple of weeks to help us to think through the different soils, the different hearts that hear the gospel.
First, we looked at the disinterested heart. Jesus says this is the one who hears the word and that seed of the word is just immediately devoured and taken away.
There's no response. There's no belief. There's no interest. It's just as if seed were scattered and a bird immediately devoured it. There are some who hear the gospel and they just have a disinterested heart.
Some in this first category hear the gospel and they respond in a very angry way. They hate the gospel. They hate the claims of God.
[1:24] They hate Christians. Others in this category may not be filled with hatred, at least not that we can see. They're just numb, cold. Either way, there's some that hear the gospel.

There's no interest. There's no interest. There's no response. No belief. Second, we looked at this second category that Jesus speaks of.
We called it the deceptive heart. The deceptive heart, according to Mark 4, is the one who hears the gospel and has some kind of a quick, immediate response.
For a while, it appears as though there's been true conversion. There's this immediate response and they get very involved, perhaps, in the church.
They seem to be growing quickly. But as he says in the parable, it's as if there was this layer of rock and the soil that's there is so rock-laden that the roots never penetrate into the heart of the one who hears it.
[2:27] And he specifically says for the second category that there are two things that happen that end up exposing them that they're not real believers.

One is tribulation. Two is persecution on account of the word. These are students who hear the gospel and have a quick, immediate response and they seem to be very excited for the things of the Lord.
And then all of a sudden, when they go to school and they start to be picked on or mocked for being a believer, they walk away from it, showing they were never truly converted. These are adults who hear the gospel and have some kind of immediate, favorable response to the church or to the situation of that worship service they were in.
And for a season, they get very devoted and plugged in. But when tribulation comes, when trials strike, they realize this Christianity charade is not working out for me and they walk away.
There's a third kind of heart. We looked at this last week. We called it the distracted heart. This is another person who hears the gospel and immediately has some kind of a favorable response.
[3:46] And the difference between the second category and the third is the one in this third category most likely carries on this charade of being a believer for quite a long time.

This could be months. This could be years. This could be decades. years. As these have had some kind of a favorable response to the gospel, but Jesus says that they end up being exposed in the words that we looked at last week because of three things.
The cares of this world. The deceitfulness of riches. And what verse 19 of Mark 4 says, the desires for other things.
Eventually, there's just something in their heart that says, I just love the world too much. And while they may have appreciated the church, they may have been involved in the church, the gospel

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

never truly penetrated into their heart.
The first category had no interest in the gospel. The second category had some kind of response until external pressures mounted on them. The third category has some kind of favorable response until internal desires of the world exposed them.
[5:08] Now, to this point, it's admittedly a little depressing, right? Because Jesus has talked about four kinds of people who hear the gospel, and the first three at the end of all things are not believers.

And that's frustrating. It's hard because what we know from that is we should expect that a number of people that we invite to respond to the gospel won't believe.
It's also frustrating because what this also teaches us is there will be people who will seem to be responding in faith, but in the end are exposed as not truly being believers.
So far, while Christ has been very helpfully honest with us, it is admittedly very hard news to consider.
But we get a fourth kind of soil, a fourth kind of heart that he describes for us in verse 8.
[6:11] We'll call it the delivered heart. The delivered heart. Verse 8 says, Then you go to verse 20 where he interprets that.

He says, But those that were sown on the good soil, these are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit.
Thirtyfold and sixtyfold and hundredfold. The delivered heart. Finally, some good news, some encouraging news, that there are those who hear the gospel and they believe they are truly delivered.
Delivered from death to life. Delivered from being an enemy of God to a child of God. And this is why, believers, we must keep preaching the gospel.
We must keep telling the good news. We must keep praying for those that we love to be saved and be delivered from sin unto salvation. Because, yes, there are many who will not believe.
[7:32] There are many who will be disinterested. That's true. But there are, praise God, those who will respond in faith. And to this we have been called.

To live a life devoted to the gospel. Not a life that gives up because ministry is hard. Not a life that quits because somebody mocks us.
Not a life that gives in in despair because of all the persecution or tribulation around us. But rather a life that says, we believe the gospel with all of our heart and we refuse to turn away from Christ.
Christ. And he says, there are those who are delivered. They're converted. As I mentioned at the very end of the message last week, it's an interesting nuance here in chapter 4.
The first heart, the disinterested heart, it says the seed in verse 4 fell along the path. The second heart, the deceptive heart, in verse 5, the seed fell on rocky ground.
[8:43] The third heart, the distracted heart, verse 7 fell among the thorns. But in verse 8, the delivered heart, the seed fell into good soil.

It penetrated the heart. It wasn't just something they heard with their ears. It wasn't just something they considered with their minds. The gospel penetrated into their heart.
Historians tell us and scholars tell us that in Jesus' day, the average yield for a crop would be 5 to 15%. Jesus says that these who believe, there are these that are yielding 30-fold and 60-fold and 100-fold.
If 5 to 15 is what the people would expect to hear by way of analogy, when Jesus says you can bear fruit 30 or 60 or 100 times, what this is saying is when someone believes, the Holy Spirit does in their life more than you could ever imagine.
which is why you should never quit praying for that person in your life to be converted. Because God can do the impossible.
[10:10] This is why you never give up on your wayward child. You keep sharing the hope of the gospel. This is why you don't give up on your unbelieving spouse.

Because our God can do the impossible. And this is why if you're a true believer, you will demonstrate it and give evidence that you really belong to Christ because the Spirit is alive in you doing more than you could ever imagine He is doing.
These are the ones who hear it and accept it. Notice that in verse 20. Those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the Word.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Now, stop right there for a minute. All four in this parable, all four kinds of people heard the same Word. The difference was not in who presented it.
The difference was not in how it was presented. They all heard the same Word. The difference is this fourth kind of person accepted, believed.
[11:19] The truth got into their heart. And it tells us that we are to hear the Word, accept it, and then look at the end of verse 20, and bear fruit.

That we are to be a fruitful people. There is to be evidence of the Lord at work within us. What kind of fruit should Christians be bearing?
Well, Ephesians 2.10 says, We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. Not saved by good works, saved by grace through faith, but saved to do good works that God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
You should be walking in, living in the good works that the Lord has called us to do. What other kind of fruit should the Christian bear?
Well, Galatians 5 tells us the fruit of the Spirit. The evidence of the work of the Spirit in your life. The fruit of the Spirit, according to Galatians 5, 22 and 23, is love and joy and peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and gentleness.
[12:45] Those are the things that give evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in your life. That you're a new creation. That you were spiritually dead, but you've been delivered, and now you've been set free.

That your heart of stone has been replaced by a heart of flesh because the gospel has moved into your heart. And now you are a person of love and joy and peace and patience and kindness.
Matthew 3.8 says, bear fruit in keeping with repentance. So just to kind of put all this together, Jesus in Mark 1 says, Jesus came preaching for you to repent and believe.
And if you repent truly, you should bear fruit in keeping with that repentance. Your life should give evidence that the gospel has changed you.
I want you to go back and notice in verse 9, after he's told these four examples, verse 9, and Jesus said, he who has ears to hear, let him hear.
[14:08] Meaning, be careful how you listen. Be careful how you respond to the gospel. Make sure that as you hear the gospel that you really believe it, that you really have accepted the truth of the gospel.

The way that you listen or don't, and the way that you respond to the gospel or don't, Jesus says is very telling. For some, they were interested in the gospel until tribulation and persecution.
For others, they were interested in the gospel until the desires for worldly things just seemed to be too great for them. Be careful how you listen.
Be careful what you do with the truth. Jesus said, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.
See, when Jesus shared the gospel, there were many who rejected. There were many who walked away. And Jesus never once made salvation seem like a small thing.
[15:41] Jesus never once said, you know what? I've got more people walking away than I have coming after me. Maybe we should make this easier, more simple. He just said, I'm telling you, I offer you everlasting life.

And if you would believe in me, you will have eternal life. And if those believe and accept it, they would be his. And if they rejected, they would be lost forever.
But Jesus never once said, maybe we should change the message. Maybe we should dial back the gospel. He just told his followers, look, you're going to share the gospel and many are going to be disinterested in it.
Some are going to deceive you and you're going to think they're believers when they're really not. Some are going to have distracted hearts and they're going to look like believers, but the truth is, they really love the world.
And there will be some who will hear the word and accept it and believe it. And this gives us our hope and our motivation to be faithful until Christ calls us home.
[16:57] So putting these last several weeks together, let me give you a few implications of the parable of the sower. I want you to make note of these.

Number one, this is really, this is kind of the now what. We've spent three or four Sundays looking through this in detail.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Now what do we do with it? All right, number one, the real condition of a heart may not be immediately known. The real condition of a heart may not be immediately known.
So I want to say to those who are here this morning, if you're not a believer, first of all, we're thrilled you've come. You're always welcome to be here. Even those who don't believe the gospel, even those who don't believe the Bible, you're always welcome to be here.
We love the chance to be able to serve you, to get to know you, and to be able to share with you what the Bible says. But I do want to be clear, if that's you today, that don't think just because you've rejected the gospel so far and life seems to be fine, that you don't need to listen carefully to the truth of the gospel.
[18:14] Don't mistake the kindness and patience of God for His indifference. There are children and teenagers and adults here right now, no doubt, who have heard the gospel before, who have not believed the gospel.

You've rejected it. You may continue to come to church because there's things you appreciate about the church, or there's friends here that you love and care about, but in your heart of hearts, you know the gospel has never penetrated into your heart, and you look around and say, my life's doing just fine.
My business is fine. My family is fine. I can continue to just listen and kind of tune it out and be disinterested because there's other things about the church, other things about Christianity that I tend to like.
And for you, life is just fine. And the danger would be that you would mistake or confuse that God is being patient and gracious with you for thinking He is indifferent to your rejection.
That's a tragic mistake. But we also have to remember there are others who appear to be genuine believers, but for some it may be a charade. And it may take time.
[19:32] It may take persecution. It may take trials to reveal who truly belong to Christ. Number two, all true believers bear fruit, but they grow at different rates.

All believers bear fruit, but they grow at different rates. I want to say to those in this room who are true believers, don't get lost in the comparison game.
Yes, if you're a true believer, you should bear fruit. Yes, if you really belong to Christ, you should be giving evidence that you really belong to Christ. But be patient. Some people will bear more fruit than you.
Some people will bear more obvious fruit than you. Focus on being faithful. Let the Spirit take care of you being fruitful. You don't need the same spiritual gift somebody else has.
You don't need the same influence somebody else has. You don't need the same level of notoriety somebody else has. Just be faithful. If you are faithful and you trust the Spirit to produce fruit in your life, you will give evidence that you belong to Christ.
[20:48] And parents, for your children, understand that your own children, if they're believers, will bear fruit, but even with your children, that will happen at different rates.

Your children are different. God has created them uniquely. They have different spiritual gifts if they're believers. You may have two or four or eight children.
They're not going to all be the same. They're not all going to grow spiritually in the exact same way. They're not going to all have the same spiritual gifts or bear the same fruit in the same way.
Parents, be patient with your children. Don't expect your second child to bear the same fruit in the same way in the exact time as your first child. Yes, all believers bear fruit, but it happens at different ways, at different rates.
Be patient. Keep teaching. Keep praying. Keep modeling. Keep serving. Be steadfast. And be patient as the Spirit does what He does.
[21:58] Third, your interest and joys will give you away either way. Your interest and your joys will give you away either way.

Given time, if your true love is the world, eventually your heart will show that. If your true love is Christ, that will become evident.
Time has a way of bringing clarity. The Bible tells us of a few men who pretended to be believers, but eventually with enough time, they were exposed, they weren't truly converted, and they walked away.
Your interest, the things you love, your joys, the things that bring you satisfaction, eventually will give ultimate evidence of whether or not you really belong to Christ.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Four, don't assume you know with certainty the final condition of someone's heart. Don't assume you know with certainty the final condition of someone's heart.
[23:08] And what I want you to understand from Mark 4 is that we need to keep scattering seed.

Keep planting seeds. And you say, yes, but Michael, even in the parable, Jesus himself tells us that three out of the four people don't really believe plant seeds anyway.
You say, but Michael, Jesus tells us that two of the four kinds of people that seem to be believers aren't even really believers.
That's true. Plant seeds anyway. Keep sharing the gospel. Keep praying for people to be saved. Keep telling your children the good news of Jesus.
Keep telling your friends that if they would repent and trust in Christ, salvation is available for them. Plant seeds anyway. Don't think that you know the final verdict on somebody's heart.
[24:13] Because Jeremiah 23, 29 tells us, these are the words of God here, is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces.

It may even be this morning. that you've heard the gospel multiple times and you've never been interested in it.
Or you've heard the gospel multiple times and you've always put it off. You'll think about it later. Or you've heard the gospel before, but you think, you know what?
I'm a pretty nice person. I'm a pretty good person. I don't really need to repent. And maybe even this morning, the hammer of God's word is breaking your heart into pieces even now, helping you to understand that you must be born again.
Fifthly, there is an invitation. Jesus tells it to us in verse 9.
[25:31] He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Jesus doesn't beg. He doesn't twist arms. He doesn't manipulate.

He doesn't try to win them to Himself with worldly means. He just says, here's the truth. Here's the gospel. And he who has ears to hear, let him hear. He who would understand and repent, let him respond.
That's the invitation. That was the invitation Jesus gave. That's the invitation we give to you today. Let him who has ears, let him hear. Let him understand.
Let him believe. Let him be delivered. In chapter 1, verse 15, turn back for just a minute with me if you would.
We were here months ago. Chapter 1, verse 15. We'll actually start in verse 14. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God, saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.
[26:50] Here's the message of Jesus. Repent and believe in the gospel. Repent and believe in the gospel. Jesus, in Mark 1, comes into town preaching.

And his sermon is, you need to believe the gospel. You need to repent. And in Mark 4, Jesus gives an expanded explanation of that gospel that the truth of God's word must break into your soul. And then he says, if you would have ears to hear this, if you would believe this, then respond and bear fruit. So just to make sure everybody that's here this morning is clear on this, when Jesus says, repent and believe the gospel, let's just be very clear on what the gospel is.
The Bible teaches us that all of us have sinned. Everyone in here has sinned. I really doubt anyone would argue with me on that.
Most of you in this room very kindly are listening very attentively and I'm so grateful for your kindness in that. But I understand that not everyone who is listening quietly and attentively is believing me.
[28:16] I get that. But whether you believe the gospel yet or not, I would just almost be positive that there's no one in this room who would try to debate me on this that we have all done wrong.

I mean, in your heart, you know that you have. You know that you've lied and shouldn't. You know that you've been boastful when you shouldn't. You know that you have been lazy or selfish when you shouldn't.
We've all done wrong. We know that. We're not perfect. None of us are. And while you may be tempted to say that's no big deal because everybody's just like me and we're all imperfect, here's the problem.
The standard for heaven is perfection. you have to be holy as he is holy. But because we are sinful, there is a break between us and God.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And so the question becomes, and this has been the question for all humanity from the beginning of time, what are you going to do to be made right with God?
[29:31] And so throughout the centuries, people have come up with all kinds of different religions. religions. And while the nuances of them and the practices are very different and unique, essentially, all of the man-made religions in the end are about the same thing, that it's something you must do, something you must provide, something you must earn.

But Christianity is not a religion invented by man. This is what has been given to us from heaven. Where uniquely in Christianity, do you not have what man has made up of what you must do to earn your salvation. It's what God himself has provided for us in the person of his son, Jesus Christ.
So all of us have sinned, and we have this distance between us and God because of it, and the Bible even clarifies that our sin earns us eternal judgment.
Now, you may not like that. You may even be offended by that. But it's still true. Somebody's feelings or opposition to reality does not change what is real.
[30:53] The Bible is very clear that our sin earns us judgment. So what will you do?

Will you try to just simply be a good person? Good compared to who? Will you try to follow laws more that you obey than you break, but what about the ones of God's law that you've broken? broken. James tells us in the New Testament that if you have broken one, you are guilty of breaking all. So if you could keep all of God's law in your entire life, but just one time break just one law, which we all do every single day, we would have no hope at all.
And this is the good news of the gospel. That we who are sinners and have earned judgment have been given the gift that God sent His only Son Jesus to a cross.
And on that cross, the Bible tells us Jesus took upon Himself our sin. And that God the Father poured out His wrath for our sin on His own Son Jesus.
[32:13] And Jesus was buried in the grave and on the third day, He rose again. Testified by multiple eyewitnesses.

Proving that His death on the cross satisfied our debt payment and that all who would believe in Him, they shall be saved.
one day, every person in this room, without exception, will stand before the Lord.
Some of you have believed the gospel. You heard it. You accepted it. You repented. You believed. It got into your heart. And when you stand before the Lord, you will stand before Him with your sins covered because they were washed away by the grace of Jesus Christ.
And God the Father took what was true of His Son, perfect righteousness, and put it in your account. And for you to stand before the Lord will be a beautiful thing.
[33:40] For others in this very room, one day you'll stand before the Lord and you may be in the category of people who were just indifferent.

Or you thought one day you would believe. Or you thought one day I'll get serious about all that stuff. But death will come before you expected it.
It always does. And you will stand before the Lord and you will not be able to plead any kind of ignorance because even this very day you've heard the gospel.
Which is why Jesus said, be careful how you listen. Can you imagine standing before the Lord knowing you had heard the gospel, it had been explained to you, and you were right there.
But you never believed. There will be others who will die and stand before the Lord and their whole life was a mocking of God.
[35:02] Hated Christians. Hated the Bible. Laughed at the things of God. One day they too will stand before the Lord.

They'll know who He is. They'll know He's the King of all kings. There will be no doubt and there will be no question and I assure you there will be no debate.
But for them it will be too late. Which is why the Lord says, be careful how you listen. Today you've heard the gospel.
We're sinners. Sin separates us from God. Christ died that we could be forgiven. And those who would believe in His name shall be saved.
If there's never been a time in your life where you have repented and believed in Christ Jesus, this is your day. no magic words, no perfect prayer to pray, but in your heart you acknowledge before the Lord that you have sinned, you believe that His Son is our Savior, and you ask Him to forgive you and be the very Lord of your life.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[36:27] And then you follow Him all the days of your life, and you bear fruit that gives evidence that your conversion was real. Now I want you to know that our church wants to help you with that.

We don't want to just simply present the gospel and you figure it out. We want to help you with that. We want to walk you through the Bible. We want to help you to understand how to grow. We want to help you to understand what it means to follow Jesus Christ.
and if we can help you with that, the bulletin you've got on the side that says connection card, what we'd ask you to do is just tear that card out and you just let us know I've given my life to Jesus today.
Or just put on there I need to be saved. I need help following Christ. I need to know how can I do what God's called me to do.
On your way out, put that in one of our giving boxes. Far more important, far more important that we can find out from you that you need help following Jesus than you put a financial offer in the offering box.
[37:42] We can help you with that. Let us do that. We would love to respond. Last number of weeks we've seen a number of people give their life to Jesus. God is saving souls.

Today, if you don't know Him, be careful how you listen because this very day can be your day of salvation or it could be a day that you'll remember for the rest of eternity knowing I heard the gospel and I walked away.
Trust in Him. Believe in Christ. particular night or one of our God is calling you for the rest of you of your life. God is calling you for the rest of you in the church.
God is calling you for the rest of you and for the rest of you in the church. God is calling you for the rest of you and for the rest of you in the church. God is calling you for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you and for the rest of you fathers and for the rest of you

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host