

Rejecting and Receiving God's Word

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: 21 July 2024

Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0 : 00] Over the last few weeks, I've actually had a couple of folks ask me some questions about the passage that we'll be in today.

So I thought it fitting before we jump back into Genesis, which would be Genesis chapter 5 for the next time. I wanted to bring this message to you.

I've preached this in the past from the Gospel of Mark, and we will be in chapter 4 eventually, but I want to start in 3 to set the tone and the context.

So rejecting and receiving God's Word is the title of the message. And in chapter 3 of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is dealing with the religious leaders, and they are just giving Him fifth.

He comes to the place where He begins then to appoint His 12 disciples. And in chapter 3, verse 20, we read this, And Jesus came home, and the crowd gathered again so that they could not even eat a meal.

[1 : 25] Now where is Jesus' hometown? Where? Right. Jesus the Nazarene. So He has come home, and the crowd has gathered, and there are so many people pressing in on Jesus, even at this early stage of His ministry, that He can't even sit down and have a meal.

And when His own people heard this, that is, His immediate family that raised Him, they went out to take custody of Jesus, for they were saying He has lost His senses.

So His family to this point is actually looking at Jesus and thinking that He has had this temporary mental lapse. He has become so irrational, we need to go get Him and keep Him from embarrassing Himself any further and causing trouble, stirring up trouble in the community with what He's saying about Himself and with what He's teaching.

So that's His own family's evaluation of Jesus Himself. But then we have this in verse 22, And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem, ooh, these are the big wigs, these are the movers and shakers in the religious community of the faith of Judaism.

They come down from Jerusalem, and they were saying, He is possessed by Beelzebul, and He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.

[2 : 57] Now you understand the gravity of what these men are saying. His family went to one degree and said that he's had this lapse, he's temporarily irrational, something's happened, maybe he's sick, I don't know, but he's out of his mind saying these things.

These guys come along on the heels of that and say, no, we know exactly what's going on. He's possessed by the devil, and he is able to do these deeds, these miraculous things, by the power of Satan, who is in him.

Pretty strong stuff, isn't it? And now we have this. Following on the religious leaders' blatant and blasphemous, scathing denouncement that Jesus is operating under the power of the evil one, Jesus then turns to teaching in parables as an answer of condemnation and judgment on the unbelieving religious elite and their followers.

Parables, friends, hide the truth. And that is intentional. Parables hide the truth of God alongside a familiar aspect of life.

You'll see this if we were to work our way through the Gospel here of Mark. You would see this over and over again from this point on. As Jesus teaches, He teaches in parables.

[4 : 20] He lays a hidden spiritual truth alongside a familiar aspect of life. Sinclair Ferguson helpfully explains that parables reflect the principles of the kingdom of God and consequently serve as mirrors of our own lives.

How so? Parables force us to ask the question, where do I stand in relation to the kingdom of God? So, you're going to be put in a position this morning through the preaching of the Word of God in this parable to ask yourself the question, where do I stand in relation to the Word of God?

This is a spiritual issue. This is a spiritual question being driven by spiritual concern for your heart, beloved. And so, your pastor isn't up here this morning preaching to cause you to doubt your salvation.

I don't want to throw you into confusion. I want to help clarify for you where you stand in the kingdom of God. Why? Because this was the concern of Jesus. So, I'm going to bring that concern forward through this message this morning.

They forced us to ask the question, again, this is Ferguson, where do I stand in relation to the kingdom of God? They show us our own hearts in the light of God's Word.

[5 : 49] So, this is designed to reveal your heart to you. God doesn't want for you to stay in a state of unbelief or a state of deception about your salvation, but He also doesn't want you to be confused about it.

You understand that the God of the universe wants you to know for 100% certain whether you are in the Lord or not in the Lord.

God wants you to know that. He's not holding that back from you like He plays games with us in our hearts. God will make this clear to you.

That's what we pray. That's what I've prayed for you over this week. So, friends, look. Parables aim at and expose two categories of people because there's only two categories of people to be exposed on the planet from God's perspective.

The first category of persons would be believers. Those who then have ears to hear. That's another way of saying these are people who have God's gift of saving faith to listen spiritually.

[7 : 05] They enjoy a holy desire to learn of the Lord. Listen, people who don't care about Jesus, people who don't care about sin, people who don't care about holiness, don't have a single concern about pleasing God and they don't have concerns about being holy before Him.

These people enjoy, then, a holy desire to learn of the Lord so that the truth nugget that is contained in the parable itself is revealed to them by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, you must have the Holy Spirit working in the Word of God in a believing heart. And the Holy Spirit will bring that truth nugget from that parable to the fore and help that person be encouraged in what God is wanting to communicate there.

Not so with the other category of people. We'll look at the next category. Unbelievers. Unbelievers. These are the scornful. These are the self-assured. These are the hard-hearted.

They reject Jesus and His wisdom. They reject the truth of the Lord because it remains hidden and inaccessible to these folks.

[8 : 25] Unbelievers forfeit the blessings that come with believing in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Of being saved from the power and penalty of sin.

That's what's at stake here in these parables. Jesus is teaching in parables to bring that reality right up into the forefront. For everybody to see and understand including the people that are being affected in unbelief.

Jesus is in effect exposing these religious leaders for who they really are. They are religious but they do not love God and His ways.

Now the parables were designed to produce a response in people's hearts. And the response becomes the evidence of whether someone was a believer or remained an unbeliever.

Now we're ready to go into the text for today and that's Mark chapter 4 and I'm going to pick it up in verse 13. 13 down through several other verses is Jesus' explanation for the parable that He just told in verses 1 down through 12.

[9 : 41] And it's the parable of what we call the soil. This is not the parable of the sower. That's a mislabel. This is the parable of the soil.

Because the point is not who's doing the sowing. It's the condition of the soil. That's what we'll bring out in the sermon as I move through this together. So let's just go through how Jesus explains the parable to His disciples beginning in verse 13.

And Jesus said to them, Do you not understand this parable? Now there's the issue. How will you then understand all the parables?

Jesus drives right into the heart of the issue because the heart is the issue. Do you not understand? Folks, we understand from our heart. You guys know who've been here at Grace for a while.

We teach that the heart is comprised of your thinking, your choosing, your feeling, and your desiring. Your mind, your will, your emotions, and your desires.

[10:49] That's your heart. That's what makes up the core of who you are as a person, as a human being. So you think from your heart. You reason from your heart. You make meaning from your heart.

You feel from within, from your heart. This is why the Jews assigned these emotive feelings to something that you have in your gut.

Right? That's how you feel it. I feel that when you're nervous, where do you feel it? When you're super excited, where do you feel it? You kind of shake inside, right? This all comes from within. So Jesus is aiming this issue at the heart. At the place where we have our understanding and the meaning of life. Now in verse 14, the sower sows the Word.

That is the truth of God. And these are the ones who are beside the road where the Word is sown. When they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the Word which has been sown in them.

[11:50] In a similar way, verse 16, these are the ones being sown on the rocky places. Those who, when hearing the truth, the Word of God, immediately receive it with joy and they have no root in themselves, but are only temporary.

Then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the Word, immediately, they fall away. So they receive it with joy at first, but in verse 17, it doesn't root and it doesn't produce any fruit. In verse 18 then, and others are those being sown among the thorns. These are the ones who have heard the Word, but the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for anything else, enter in and choke the Word and it becomes, what?

Unfruitful. And, verse 20, those are the ones which were sown on the good soil. They who hear the Word and accept it and are bearing fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

There's Jesus' explanation of the parable that He just told about the soils just before this moment. The parable of the soils then, friends, exposes and explains the spiritual condition of your heart and my heart and each person's heart in terms of its response to God's truth.

[13:41] That's the issue. How is my heart, how is your heart responding to the truth of God? Now, what I just read to you, three of these conditions, three of these conditions there at the top reveal a heart of what?

without or minus saving faith in Jesus Christ as God's only Son. So, two-thirds of this message are going to be dealing with those whose hearts are not responding to God's Word in saving faith.

These are not believers. That's very important that we understand that this is what's happening.

One condition at the very end in verse 20, one condition shows saving faith in a heart that receives and obeys God's truth and then in turn, because of that reception, that repentant reception and that obedience, they then reap the blessings of that belief and obedience.

That's the way it works. So, the interpretive key, each parable has an interpretive key, the interpretive key for this parable is provided for us in what the Lord said about the parable.

And I want to put this up here for you just for clarity. The sower sows the Word. So, what is the seed? The Word.

[15:15] The truth of God. Satan then comes and takes away the Word which has been sown in them in all three instances. That's what's happening.

That's the basic idea of what we're playing on these two parallel things. The Word is sown. Satan comes and takes it away. Now, what does Jesus mean by the Word of God being sown in them? Because, and I want to deal with this, because if you're me and you're sitting out there listening to this, you're thinking, are we talking about someone losing their salvation? Are we dealing, I mean, he's saying that it goes into them.

How does Satan have the power to reach into the human life and take away what God's put in?

That makes Satan sound more powerful than God. Now, we've got to deal with that. The reason is because that is not true.

God's grace is greater than our sin. Amen? And God is the sovereign God of the universe. He saves as His will and kindness dictates. And so, we know that there's no power in the universe including your will.

[16:23] Beloved, let me point like this. Let me do military pointing. Including your will. Your will is not more powerful than the will of God. You should say amen to that.

Or you'd stay in sin. If your will could trump the will of the Lord, you'd choose to stay in sin. I would too. But God's will is stronger than our will. I'm glad that He overcomes our will of sin to give us a

will that desires to please Him in all things.

That is the power of Almighty God in the cross. Thank the Lord Jesus Christ. So the question that we want to deal with now is what does Jesus mean by the word being sung in them?

In where? Let me cross-reference a couple of places with you. Go to Luke 8.12. This will not come as a surprise to you. We're not up here trying to say novel things.

We're up here to say the truth of the Lord. Luke 8.12. Here's Luke's parallel rendition of this.

[17 : 33] And those beside the road are those who have heard then the devil. Now notice, they heard the truth. Then the devil comes and takes away the word from where?

their heart. Their heart. So that they will not believe and be saved. Now we're going to do some more with this, but you can see here Luke is telling us the locusts, the place where this is happening.

It's in their heart. He's taking it away from their heart. Matthew chapter 13 is another area we want to look at. Matthew 13 verse 19 Here's Matthew's parallel account.

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it. You see, there's the issue, folks. Don't let this confuse you. These are not people who got saved and then Satan robbed them of their salvation.

What's the issue? When anyone hears the word, you can hear the word. You shared the word with people and they've not been saved. Just like I have. They hear the word according to Matthew of the kingdom and does not understand it.

[19 : 00] When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. In his heart.

This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. So what are we dealing with here? We're dealing with people who were never saved in the first place.

This is not the word of God saving faith taking root in the human heart so that it begins to flourish in saving faith in the work of the miracle of God transforming or transferring you from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light Colossians chapter 1 verses 13 and 14 that is not what's happening here.

How do we know that? Because Jesus is telling us that. The word is not taking root in their heart. Believe me when I tell you please folks believe me when I tell you what we're talking about in people getting saved is not a childish but a childlike faith.

A belief that is like the belief of a child toward their parents these little kids I remember telling my wife when my kids were really small and they looked up to me they thought the sun rose and set and daddy and mommy right?

[20 : 20] Anything that we told them I could have went and told them that there were monsters with five heads that lived under their bed and they wouldn't sleep for night after night if I didn't do that I did not do that but if I did that they would believe me right?

They're that gullible they're that innocent and receptive of what we tell them now they grow out of that pretty fast but nevertheless when they're little they're like that this is a childlike faith not a questioning faith this is a faith that looks to its source and has such a high regard for the source that it's willing to believe whatever the source tells them this is a faith that God gives us it's a gift from heaven and that saving faith helps make the object of the faith Jesus Christ alone the object of saving faith is Jesus Christ alone it's not a plan it's not an ideal it's a person and it's the person of God's Holy Son that's who saved us we are not saved by the four spiritual laws we're saved by a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ it's very personal this is what these people in these first three instances are missing saving faith and Jesus is pointing this out because the religious leaders have just accused him of doing all that he's doing in the way of healing the man on the Sabbath that had the withered arm he probably had a little withered stump or something here and Jesus healed him so that in front of everybody a full arm healthy arm was replaced but he did it on the Sabbath and now the religious leaders are having a duck fit over all of that well

Jesus is going to do more of these and so he casts out demons from a guy who'd been and so they're having a duck fit over that and now they're having to come up with an explanation because they're jealous of Jesus and they feel threatened by him so the religious leaders are saying I'll tell you where this power is coming from it's coming from the devil that's supposed to put everybody on so Jesus in response to all of that nonsense begins to teach them in parables he hides the truth from those who are unbelieving and it is revealed to those who have the power of the Holy Spirit working in them that's condemnation and judgment folks and that's what these men are receiving

the word of God's saving truth that is what we call the gospel the good news of God's forgiveness of sin offered through faith alone by grace alone in Christ Jesus alone is taken away from their hearts so that they may not believe and be saved that's what the word of God says so here's what we have so far look the sower then is anyone the sower is not the point of the story the sower is anyone who shares the truth of God's gospel the truth that Jesus saves from our sins through faith in his sacrifice on the cross made on our behalf standing in as our substitute to pay the penalty for our sins not his sins

Jesus was not a sinful man was he he was perfect in all ways Luke 8 11 tells us the seed is the word of God that's a quote from Luke 8 11 the seed is the word of God the soil is the heart of each person where the seed falls we want to clear up all that confusion that you may have had over this the condition then or the preparation of the heart the soil is what makes the difference in the response of each person so that if God doesn't work in the human heart the human heart will never choose God never the soil will remain just exactly what it is in these cases it's hard soil it's unfertile soil and so the seed can't take root now here here then are the three conditions of the heart related to a person rejecting God's word of saving truth in Jesus

Christ three rejections there's only one true way this reminds you of what Jesus is going to teach about the broad road and the narrow road doesn't it the broad road many people are on that road the narrow road only few the gate is easy to miss that goes to the narrow road isn't it that's another way of saying you'll never find it on your own you'll walk right by it you'll walk right by Jesus every time unless God works in your heart stops you in your tracks gently grabs your face puts it on Jesus Christ and gives you the faith to believe in him it won't happen that's what we teach here at grace because that's what we believe the bible teaches all right so the three conditions that we're going to deal with let's look first at rejecting God's word and the first one we'll deal with is the indifferent heart the indifferent heart Jesus said to them do you not understand this parable well then if you don't understand this one how will you understand all the parables because this is the basic foundational parable of what it means to have faith in

[25 : 52] God the sower sows the word these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown and when they hear immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them you notice that immediately that's a phrase that Mark really likes it's all throughout his gospel this is the indifferent heart indifferent here means exactly what you think it means apathetic unconcerned uninterested but mainly unresponsive so there's there's no question here about what's going on when these people are confronted with the truth of God's word it is an immediately unresponsive rejection of the truth indifferent people then are unaffected they are unchanged in their hearts by the truth of God God's ways his truth are completely unimportant and irrelevant to them now you've had this in your life

I've had this in my life people that I've loved and still love and care about sharing the gospel and the hope of Christ with them and they remain completely apathetic I remember when I did this once with my grandfather I had already shared the gospel with my grandfather on several occasions over several years this time I was sitting with him in his living room sharing the gospel with him with tears and I was telling him I love you so much granddaddy and I so much want to be in heaven with you will you please let me tell you about the Lord Jesus and I started to share the gospel with him I'll never forget what he did he literally changed the subject on me with me and mid sentence I can't remember what he went to probably the tractors or something aspect of farming because he was a farmer and just cut me straight off it was as if I wasn't even talking that's this heart it's a heart completely unresponsive completely unchanged completely unaffected by the truth of the gospel other than just making people angry welling up their pride so that they become even harder and more bitter that's this heart the seeds of

God's truth never begin to germinate much less take root in their hearts because they're indifferent they have no use for what God offers they are cold hearted toward the Lord now who's behind this reality what we see here Satan Satan the great liar the great deceiver he comes to steal away the truth that they heard and they take no notice of the fact that they have not been changed in any way by hearing God's word they are completely apathetic this is one kind of response to God's word being shared with people and going out now the Bible says this here's an interesting parallel to what we're talking about here with Satan's activity in the life of these people here's an interesting parallel look at this self-righteous unbelievers in whose case the God of this world has blinded the mind of the unbelieving that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image

of

God human beings have no answer in themselves for this reality I want to ask you now wait a minute is it Satan taking God's word away from these people and making it useless to them or is it that they're unbelieving and hard-hearted toward the word and don't want to have anything to do with it which one is it Jeff which one would you say it is both she said and that's right it's both how do we know that because that's what the word teaches the word is teaching us that Satan is involved in this activity but these people were unbelieving to begin with we start out life like that we start out life and doubting being unbelieving being bitter toward being angry toward we are enemies of the cross of Christ enemies folks that's powerful language the language is Bible we are callous and hard hearted if you go to Ephesians chapter four for example in verse 17 and following you'll read an account of how hardened and callous and ignorant we are in our unbelief that is a picture of us before God does the miracle of saving faith in our heart so this is what we're dealing with we're dealing with self righteous unbelievers and Satan works in their heart and he blinds them to the truth and robs them of the truth but they are unaffected by all of that because they belong to him and they don't care now we see this next one this next rejection is what

I'm going to call the hardened heart these these interplay and intermix and spill over into each other so I'm not trying to make these super hard fast categories I'm just trying to work through the passage with you look what we're dealing with here beginning in verse 16 in a similar way see that's what Jesus is admitting these are similar in a similar way these are the ones being sown on the rocky places those who when hearing the word immediately receive it with joy oh boy boy this looks like somebody just got saved and they have no root in themselves but are only temporary then when affliction or persecution arises because of the word immediately they fall away that's an important caveat that I want to bring out hardened hearts are then likened to rocky ground where the roots can't go deep and bring the needed life giving nutrients to the plant so this is a shallow rooted kind of plant but unlike the indifferent heart these seeds in this case show the signs initially of taking root in the soil if you've ever gardened or you've ever tried to grow plants decorative plants or something or maybe veg of some kind and you have a you put a plant somewhere and it starts to flourish and you start to see the evidence that it's and then all of a sudden it begins to fade and wilt and fall and you go what in the world I've had this happen time and time again sometimes I've been able to narrow the problem but other times not but I can tell you in the case of every single one of them at least one thing that was going on there was a problem in the soil with the root I may not be able to figure out exactly what it is because some plants like to be in some places and some plants don't you've got to find the place it likes that's part of gardening you've got to accept it that's what's going on here notice that there's the outward appearance of what the text says look at the text receiving the word with joy but now there's a separate reality Jesus is going to expose in reality they have quote they have no root in themselves there's no root being produced no spiritual root being produced in their heart and so it's only a matter of time before you're not going to see any spiritual fruit why because there's no spiritual root to produce it the fruit comes from the root and so you're not going to see that in people's lives in terms of faith the truth doesn't take root it doesn't penetrate now in this case there is a hidden hardness just below the surface and it won't allow for the truth to change their heart when God's truth now here's this please this is the qualification when God's truth suits their cause when God's truth supports their position when God's truth aids their agenda then they accept it why because it's convenient but when God's truth counters or convicts or cautions his word is ignored or explained away so God's word becomes a matter of convenience or inconvenience say Jeff how do you know that look back at the text with me and look what it says in verse 17 they have no root in themselves so we know they're not saved they are only temporary anything that we saw that we thought might be salvation is temporary it's just a matter of time then notice notice the key when affliction or persecution arises because of what life the word this is [35 : 07] what I'm talking about it's a matter of convenience or inconvenience about God's word whenever God's word is bringing a support to their agenda or their lifestyle or their choice then I am all about God's word but when God's word begins to conflict with or caution or convict me about some aspect of my life I got no use for it now I'm going to explain it away it's because of the word persecution and affliction will come as a result of being faithful to God's word amen you can expect that all who live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted when you live faithfully to Jesus Christ you're going to receive persecution in the world they're going to laugh at you brother I look at you just and I see you and I say man you're getting ready to go pursue a degree in biology right we need to pray for you because you're going to be assaulted and made to feel ridiculous every time

your faith rises up and contradicts what they're telling you in the way of lies about all this stuff with biology brothers hang in there stay true to words that's just one instance of someone in our midst who's going to face this he's going to be persecuted for being faithful to Jesus and you will too so when the persecution comes because they're holding to this joyful thing that they first started off with they immediately realize this yeah yeah and so what do they do they get out of dodge they abandon the whole thing maybe in that instance or whatever and then they start looking for ways to do this listen to this they are not responding to Jesus as the Lord and

Savior that is not what this is about for them this isn't about Jesus about them eventually then here's what eventually the response proves to be nothing more than an emotional reaction not a spiritual breaking of the heart and a crushing of their pride temptation and time exposes this reality give it time give them time in the real world and if they say they want to live for Jesus and the world starts slapping them around because they're trying to do it these are the people who say yeah I've had enough of that and off they go these people will also do what the next ones will do these people will start trying to justify their lifestyle in terms of their rejection of the word they'll start reinterpreting the Bible with you you watch I've had this so many times where I've had to sit with people and talk to them about a certain issue in their life and we come to see that God is revealing sin in their life through this circumstance and they don't want to have any part of it don't you tell me they're the problem or that's the problem or if we could just get this squared away over here or over here I'll be copacetic anything but putting the locus of the problem on their own heart all right let me move on to the disloyal heart this is the final rejection that we have here and it's in verse 18 others are those being sown among the thorns these are the ones who've heard the word see now in each case friends they've heard the truth but it's their response to the truth that reveals what's what's going on but the worries of the world the deceitfulness of riches and the desires you see how he's just zeroing right in on the heart the motives of your heart the desires for anything else anything else it could be anything enter in and choke the word and it becomes what unfruitful how telling is this friends this is another example of the seed of God's word germinating everything starts out looking fine but then it takes no root it doesn't go deep into the heart so before the seed the word of God the truth can grow into any degree of maturity and produce the proper fruit it's all choked out by the thorns of this world choked out by the thorns of this world here's the gardening illustration again these people as an agrarian society they would have understood this these were people who were steeped in agriculture if they didn't grow it they didn't eat kind of thing this was a big deal for these people so they understood these analogies this would have immediately connected with these folks here we have this plant that begins to show the signs again and then it's choked out the weeds come it it looks like it's starting to take off and get some help and now all of a sudden the flurry of weeds just come and just wrap and choke it out and drain all the nutrients out of it and stop it you've seen this I have too this is why when I was little bitty I'm six years old and my the hoe was taller than I was and my grandfather has me out in our little garden two acres and I've got a hoe and I'm going down and he's showing me how to hoe weed I get that from a very young age I hate weed I can't stand them that you know what I do with weeds now I don't hoe them oh no I have a better that's right they can tell me it curates cancer all they want I don't care I got my roundup and I'm out there and I'm laughing as I'm doing it I love it and then I watch them do this I love it I'm all for it I'm glad they invented it keep it up round up every bit of it so it's like molten world I won't go there anyway I hate moles too I don't know why the Lord made rattlesnakes and moles but he did the curse that's perfect that's perfect man yeah yeah so listen the point is God's word is not cultivated in their heart where it can grow where it can flourish where it can produce a crop of good fruit and listen to this one it isn't watered by the love for Jesus Christ it's not there is no love for the Lord here folks and if these people say that they're feeling themselves there's no love for the Lord in this there's no love for God's truth in this they don't love the word the word is not precious to them they are not willing to submit their hearts to God's word they just want to make their point they just want to be right they just want things to be their way so there's no yieldedness in their heart toward the truth of the Lord they don't let it break them they don't let it lead them to repentance and humility and obedience in the Lord and listen to this last one no love for Christ no love for God's word and finally no love for God's people no love for God's people when the going gets tough these people bail and they bail on you in a heartbeat God's truth is choked out by preoccupation with the cares the values the riches the perspective and the concerns of this world hear the way that I say this now while all three of these rejected

responses are evil in my mind this one is the most deceptive and dangerous now I want to tell you why why because this particular response to God's word can go on so long giving the appearance of being a Christian I've seen this these folks try to blend their faith with their heart of worldliness by trying to find common ground with the world this is what you'll find when you try to talk to these people about their walk with the Lord when you try to help them further clarify and define their heart in walking with Jesus these people will not gravitate to truth they will gravitate toward common denominators with the world what are they trying to do they're trying to reduce the truth to the lowest common denominator you understand what I'm saying or do I need to they're always do kids do this this is the way children they're always looking for the lowest common denominator in the issue because if they can bring it down to the lowest common denominator they can swim in that and justify and rationalize you hold the bar up here with God's truth and pull people to it and that truth reveals to them those kinds of weirdnesses and ploys and schemes it exposes it for what it is and it won't let them wiggle out see that's why we preach don't we brother that's why we preach the truth uncompromised we're not going to stand up here and give you our opinions and we're not going to give you the world we don't care what the world thinks about this they can hate it all they want this is the truth that sets men's hearts free until we preach it this one in my mind is the most dangerous because of this as they try to blend their faith with worldliness they try to find that common ground and the priorities of God and a faithful obedient living to please the Lord all too often then get rejected or neglected why why is that the case because listen now here's how I want you to hear me say this because making obedience to Jesus such a high priority in life would get in the way of a life busy with other things you understand friends making obedience to Jesus such a high priority in their life is just going to get in the way of a life busy with other things don't try to lay that on me kind of thing they don't grow in the Lord because they're not born again I want to make that perfectly clear these people are not growing in Christ they are not gaining any spiritual maturity because there's no Holy Spirit living in them Jesus is making that clear these folks then end up twisting God's word to justify their worldly appetites and lifestyle they come to expect others to share in this perverse sinful logic as well brother Greg how many times have you and I sat in the past in meetings with people nothing fresh nothing fresh like recent and had people try to justify this kind of stuff when we confronted them and said friend listen and they no no no my interpretation is here and you know what they do this is what I've had them do they'll run out and find a book from some author that justifies their interpretation and now here's what I hear well that's your interpretation that's your interpretation but right here this guy wrote

[46 : 50] he said I had a woman do this I had a woman do this I had a woman do this with me for two solid hours one time two hours she talked nonstop quoting from this book at the end of the day I couldn't I couldn't help her her heart had just grown too hard for all of us the person that I'm talking about in this group is consumed with his own or her own appetites and agendas and so here's how they approach what I what I would say to him hey look there's no need to go overboard with God church in the Bible all right you're like you're like you're like in the stratosphere with this stuff you need to bring it down to earth dude you're so unrealistic this is not how people live and I say I know that's the problem that's the problem is we don't live like holy people we're not putting a priority on holiness we're putting the priority on happiness and we're bailing on God and the truth and that's not going to set anybody free I'm not a good pastor if I come alongside of you and subscribe to that agenda then I let you stay deceived and your blood's on my hands no these people are always looking for the path of least spiritual investment tell me the least I can do

James calls people like this double-minded and unstable and unstable in all their ways and I want to share with you James's answer to this kind of worldliness that Jesus is pointing out Jesus is saying the reason the truth never takes hold in their hearts is worldliness the cares of the world the priorities of the world the emphases of the world are like weeds that come and wrap around all of that and choke the life out of it and they can't get any joy they can't get any peace they're constantly chasing a shadow and here's what James answers to that therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness in humility receive the word implanted which is able to save your soul that's why we won't compromise on the word but prove yourselves to be doers of the word and not merely hearers who delude themselves that's exactly what Jesus is saying these are people who've heard the word and they're deluding themselves they're deceived they're self-deceived they're not living out any spiritual fruit because there's no Holy Spirit in them to produce it alright finally we end on a good note receiving God's word receiving not rejecting notice what he says in verse 20 those

are the ones which were sown on the good soil see here's the issue is the soil not the sower the sower is the one sowing the seed he's just sowing it out there and it's fallen where it falls they were sown on the good soil and so as a consequence they who hear the word and accept it there's the difference between all the other people who heard the word they accept it and are bearing fruit that bearing fruit becomes evidence that they've received it into their heart and then this thirty sixty and a hundred fold what do we have here well first of all we have Jesus giving us the principle of process what are we talking about here these are the seeds that fell into the good soil they notice grew up and increased so that's showing that they have a good root system they've embedded themselves these terms picture the seedling then pushing the seedling pushing its way up through the soil to reach toward the light to get to the air so that it can continue to grow this is the picture of holy saving faith perseverance perseverance people who are genuinely born again persevere in the power of the Holy Spirit because God owns you and he will never let you go so you will even as you struggle you will continue to persevere this is the kind of confession that comes from people like that

I'm struggling I'm not sure I'm trying to work it out but this I know I want Christ and his word in my life I want to please Jesus above all things that's the heart God's working in I want to please Jesus in all things folks if that's absent doubt your faith now I've got to tell you that because I don't want you to be deceived and I don't want your blood on my hands if it's not about Jesus Christ in your life you need to think about what is going on in your heart that's what these are designed to do it's terrible remember at the first I told you it's supposed to make you question is Jesus on the throne of your life does Jesus sit on the throne of your heart do you want to please Jesus in all things even as you struggle folks Greg and I struggle don't we brother we pray for each other we hold each other accountable we walk close as best friends together but we struggle in this life struggling is not the same as giving up struggling is not the same as saying

I've heard some people say to me yeah I'm struggling with this and then I ask them to tell me about what's going on and I listen and I say brother that's not struggling that's giving in I don't hear struggle I hear you just chasing sin man where's the struggle there's a difference between that this particular issue then is an issue of persevering in the faith time listen time works with a receptive heart not against it it is a process for the receptive obedient heart to be molded by God's truth over time so as time goes by more growth takes place in the receptive heart now look it may be hard for you to perceive it right sometimes we go through seasons in our life where it's hard to perceive spiritual growth in our life we feel like we're doing more struggle than growing have you had that so we need people around us to put their arm around us and say hey those close to us hey here's what

I know that I know you've really but here's what I see I see a persevering faith in you that may be all they can give you in the moment that may be all they can offer you is I see you struggling and persevering in the faith and that right there is an indication of the Holy Spirit working in your life why?

[54 : 02] because unbelievers don't care about sin unbelievers don't care about holiness unbelievers don't care about pleasing the Lord that's not even on their radar unbelievers don't want to get caught unbelievers don't want to be inconvenient unbelievers don't want anything threatening their agenda holy people care about what it's doing to Jesus and their walk with Jesus and the people around them who love Jesus they don't want to be a discouragement they don't want to bring their brothers and sisters down that's why we need to put our arms around each other and say hey you're not bringing me down if you go down I go down with you if you fall you take me with you I'm not going anywhere we are locked into this together if you crash and burn if you crash and burn

I crash and burn with you that's my commitment that's what we need to say to each other and we need to mean it now the Lord tells us that we can stumble and fall but the Psalms tell us we will not fall headlong she says we will not fall headlong the Lord won't let that happen because you wouldn't let that happen to your child would you?

how far would you go for your child? now you multiply that by the universe and that's God's heart for you as His kids now you take encouragement from this folks it is unnatural for a receptive heart not to grow over time that's unnatural God has so designed this process that He will grow you in spiritual maturity as you yield submit yourself to His truth and seek to obey Him He will grow you in the Lord again at times and in seasons it may be all but imperceptible to you but that doesn't mean He's not working in your heart and growing you in the Lord alright let me give you one more here

the principle then of production that process now production from verse 20 healthy plants yield good fruit so we produce from what we are Jesus says this those are the ones which were sown on the good soil so they hear the word they receive the word they're bearing fruit how much?

30 60 and 100 fold wow that's kind of undeniable isn't it? we're talking about bumper crops here we reproduce according to like kind in other words your lifestyle and your actions will reflect on who you are you will do from who you are as a person so you reproduce yourself according to who and what you are it'll show up in your life the word of God always produces good fruit always 100% of the time the word of God working in a submissive heart always produces good fruit the work of God by the power of the Holy Spirit convicting you and bringing you to embrace the truth in a humble obedient heart a repentant heart will always bring about the good works of the Holy Spirit in your life that's the way it works bad fruit is the product of sin not God's truth working in your heart amen bad fruit is the product of your sin and my sin in my life 100% of the time we can't blame that on God and His word but we do

God's word just ain't working for me it's not a problem with the word is it one of the most revealing passages on the issue of a receptive heart producing good fruit would be in Luke 6 I'm going to go there and read it to you and it's beginning in verse 43 of this dialogue that Jesus has been having with these people in verse 33 of chapter 6 of the book of Luke Jesus says for there is no good tree which produces bad fruit that would be like saying an orange tree produces apples you can't get that from an orange tree no a good tree produces good fruit right for there is no good tree which produces bad fruit nor on the other hand a bad tree which produces good fruit for each tree is known by its fruit men do not gather figs from thorns nor do they pick grapes from a bramble bush the good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil his mouth then speaks from the abundance of his heart everything you and I say and do issues from our heart again what is our heart our mind will emotions and affection the core of who we are that's what we're made up of that's our heart and this is what

[59 : 32] Luke tells us so the issue of fruit bearing as Jesus says thirty sixty and a hundred fold that refers to God's blessing the blessings of reaping the harvest of obedience and truthful faithful living don't expect blessing when you're living in sin that's not going to happen you're going to have trials and troubles and suffering living faithfully unto the Lord it's why it's why Peter would tell us look don't suffer as a murderer don't suffer as a sinner who's seeking to hide your sin and be unrepentant if you're going to suffer suffer for following Jesus make it worthwhile make it purposeful Peter tells us that be wise in the parable in the parable we're looking at now this incredible increase thirty sixty a hundred fold is that of financial blessing for the farmer yes in the story having a bumper crop but in spiritual terms what Jesus is really getting at here it's the good works we do as the Holy Spirit teaches us empowers us for holy God pleasing living this is the abundance of spiritual living and blessing in our life and that blessing is not always going to reflect material gain is it it's the blessing of peace and patience and kindness and gentleness and self-control being worked in your life where people around you look at you and say man I remember not long ago there was a day when you would have just blown up over that and look at you where's this peace coming from where's this focus coming from this parable tells how a prideful worldly heart rejects

God's truth yes it does and pride is the chief expression of an unbelieving heart people reject the truth of the Lord by their own prideful choice they can't blame it on the devil does the devil work yes he does but he's working in an unbelieving heart a heart already hardened to the truth these people are self-deceived and hard-hearted and Jesus is highlighting our helplessness Jesus is highlighting our hard-heartedness and our need for his grace the whole point of this is you cannot be this person from verse 20 apart from the power of God working in your heart you can't do it unfortunately many of the scribes and Pharisees rejected Jesus' truth on this some got saved you'll see in John chapter 3 Nicodemus coming to Jesus how must the person be born again and Jesus telling him and Nicodemus saying what

I can't go back into the womb and be born again how are you supposed to do this and he tells him this is the work of the Holy Spirit brother and you as a leader of Israel you don't understand this stuff these people are in trouble later Nicodemus will get saved he'll come to know the truth of the Lord no this is the work of the Holy Spirit making the difference in how we love and in how we live so our patient endurance and loving and living for God through our trials our sufferings our challenges our fears our doubts and all of that even through our failures in the moments of our sin the

perseverance in worshipping God from our hearts and with our lives all of those things are the proofs of God's word being rooted in the soil of our heart which he prepared for us to receive from his hands beforehand good work prepared beforehand let me end with Peter offering us this encouragement grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity amen let's pray together dear father in heaven I pray for my brothers and sisters to be encouraged and rooted and grounded in saving faith in Jesus Christ and in him alone and so I pray that you will safeguard and protect my my friends and my brothers and sisters from the schemes of the devil to confuse them about their salvation I pray that you will clarify in their hearts where they stand in this parable where their hearts stand in relationship to the kingdom of God that is the kingdom glory of Jesus reigning in their heart or not please help clarify this for them today that they would be doers of the word and not hearers only that the word of God will take deep root in their souls and produce the spiritual fruit of love for Jesus love for the truth and love for your people help us to be careful as we minister to each other in these ways

Lord to be prayerful and persevering and patient with each other as each of us are on this journey trying to work through these things together so I pray that those who are saved in here today would be free from the confusion of doubt and I pray for those who are not saved in this place today to go out with an unsettledness and a desire a growing desire to settle this issue in their heart by coming to Christ lead us in these ways father thank you for your goodness and your grace in Jesus name we pray amen Blood ■ harder to stay juntos introduction music to the meaning ■ ■ louder love people Korean love God talk to me in this pas into Erich our heart breathe after beautiful j'me understand interactions fundamentals