

GETTING STARTED

As you consider this week's message on the *Parable of the Sower*, which of the four kinds of soil best describes your response to the Gospel when you first heard it?

What encouraged you most by Terri Smith's testimony from her recent trip to Senegal?

Have you ever said (or thought to yourself) that someone else would be better equipped to share the Gospel with some of the people in your life?

DISCUSSION

Read Mark 4:1-20 (Matthew 13:1-23)

Who is the farmer?

What is the Seed?

What characterizes each type of soil? What happens to the seed in each kind of soil?

1. Path: Why does God's Word not take root at all in some people?
2. Rocks: What causes the plants in this soil to wither?
3. Thorns: What three things choked off the third plants?
4. Good Soil: What do you think Jesus means by the spectacular harvest produced by the good soil?

Read Mark 4:21-34

The purpose of keeping something hidden is so that one day it can be revealed. Jesus' teaching was never intended to be just for an inner circle of followers. It would be the responsibility of the disciples to communicate the gospel of the kingdom to the world at large (Matthew 28:18-20).

- In what ways do you boldly "let your light shine"? In what ways is it difficult for you to let your light shine for Christ?
- Why does it seem easier to witness to others in a far-away land?
- Why is it harder to witness to family & friends locally?
- In verses 26-29, what part, if any, do people play in the growth of the kingdom?
- What does the parable about the mustard seed teach us about God's kingdom?

Respond to these summary points from today's passage and discuss how they encourage you in your witness for Christ.

- The sower does not prejudge the soil – he casts the seed with abandon.
- Success comes from God. The sower can take no credit for success and should not beat himself up for failure (1 Corinthians 3:5-9).
- Sowers are not called to be successful but faithful.

PRAYER

In groups of 2-3, take time to pray for boldness in your witness, ask God to open doors this week for you to share the gospel with at least one person, and consider some of the prayers below for someone you can pray for by name who does not know Jesus yet.

Praying for others who don't know the Lord Jesus

- I pray, Lord, that you draw _____ to yourself (John 6:44).
- I pray that _____ will seek to know you (Acts 17:27).
- I pray that _____ will hear and believe the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
- I ask you to prevent Satan from blinding _____ to the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:25-26).
- Holy Spirit, I ask you to convict _____ of his/her sin and his/her need for Christ's redemption (John 16:7-11).
- I ask you to send someone who will share the Gospel with _____ (Matthew 9:37-38).
- I also ask that you give me and other believers opportunity, the courage and the right words to share with _____ (Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:3-6).
- Lord, I pray that _____ will turn from his/her sin (Acts 17:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).
- Lord, I pray that _____ would place his/her trust in Christ and receive Your free gift of eternal life (John 1:12; John 5:24).
- Lord, I pray that _____ will confess Christ as Lord of his/her life, that his/her faith would take root and grow, and that he/she would bear much fruit for your glory (Luke 8:15; Romans 10:9-10; Colossians 2:6-7).

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ...

1 Peter 3:15