

TALK IT OVER

Listen Up!

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus' parables are tools that teach reality from God's point of view.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Are you a gardener? If so, what is your most successful crop? If not, if you could plant with a guarantee it would grow, what would you choose?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

RESOURCES

- The Daily:
newpointe.org/thedaily
- [Why Did Jesus Preach in Parables?](#)
(3½ min.)

VERSES AND QUOTES

A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. – Matthew 13:3-9,18-23 NIV

“This parable is not about farming; it is about the human heart. It explains why some people are transformed by the Word of God and others remain unchanged. The difference is not the seed. It's the soil.” – Dwight Mason

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Jesus' explanation of the parable is clear. **The hard soil is the closed heart.** What hardens a heart? Tell of a time your hard heart was softened. **The rocky soil is the shallow heart.** The seed develops no roots. Suffering shows if we are rooted. Discuss your own experience. How do you ascertain that your relationship is not simply emotional? **The thorny soil is the distracted heart.** Jesus identified thorns as the worries of life; satisfaction through wealth and other things. These are “idols” that are usually not “bad” but slowly choke our spiritual vitality. What do you identify in your life that has the capacity to take up too much head and heart space? **The good soil is the receptive heart** – humble, repentant, surrendered, teachable. The evidence of genuine faith is gradual transformation. Where is God currently transforming you? Who could witness to your change?

ACTION STEP

I will open my heart to the seed of the Word by humble obedience in _____