



The Parable of the Soils

Read Matthew 13:1-9 (The story can also be found in Mark 4:1-9 and Luke 8:4-8)

- This story is sometimes described as a parable about parables, why might this be true?
- In the chapters leading up to this story there are many different reactions to Jesus (See 11:2-3, 20-21, 12:14-16, 22-23). How do people feel about Jesus today? What reaction have you received when you've spoken to people about Jesus?

Read Matthew 13:13-15

- Jesus says that his listeners fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9-10 which speaks of the heart being calloused (hard). Why do you think the condition of our hearts so important? (remember in Hebrew there is no word for brain, you know and understand things in your heart).

Read Matthew 13:18-23

- The seed in the story represents the message of the kingdom. In what way is the sowing of seed an effective metaphor for the way in which the message of the kingdom is given?
- The seed that falls on hard ground could be seen as a picture of those with a hard heart. What sorts of things cause us to harden our hearts against Jesus message? What warning does Jesus give to those with hard hearts (verse 19)?
- The seed that falls on the rocky ground could be seen as a picture of those with a shallow heart. Jesus says "When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away". What sort of trouble or persecution can cause us to fall away?
- Read Colossians 2:6-7, how can we ensure that our roots are deep?
- The seed that falls on thorny ground could be seen as a picture of those with a strangled heart. Jesus describes the thorns as "The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth", in what way do these two things 'strangle' our faith? Can you think of any other 'thorns' than can cause us to stop growing? What can we do about them?
- The seed that falls on good ground could be seen as a picture of those with an open heart. Jesus says that they produce "A crop yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown", what does this look like? (See Galatians 5:22-23)
- What does this story say to you personally?

