

Wednesday with the Word

Wheat Street Baptist Church

“A church in the heart of Atlanta with Atlanta in its’ heart”
We Are Atlanta’s Church

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The Keys to Growing: The Soil and Seed Issue

Parable = The Greek word *parable* comes from two smaller words put together that mean something like “tossed near” or “put beside” as in “compare,” So Jesus will say, “The Kingdom of God is like....”

Mark 4:1-9 CEV

The next time Jesus taught beside Lake Galilee, a big crowd gathered. It was so large that he had to sit in a boat out on the lake, while the people stood on the shore. **2** He used stories to teach them many things, and this is part of what he taught:

3 Now listen! A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. **4** While the farmer was scattering the seed, some of it fell along the road and was eaten by birds. **5** Other seeds fell on thin, rocky ground and quickly started growing because the soil wasn’t very deep. **6** But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and dried up, because they did not have enough roots. **7** Some other seeds fell where thornbushes grew up and choked out the plants. So they did not produce any grain. **8** But a few seeds did fall on good ground where the plants grew and produced thirty or sixty or even a hundred times as much as was scattered.

9 Then Jesus said, “If you have ears, pay attention.”

Story - we are wired for story. We understand and learn best via stories. Wheat Street Productions will be our story telling ministry. Media with a message; changing the world via faithful story tellers. Telling the story to change the world.

The ground makes a difference.

What is good ground from a faith based perspective?

Are you good ground?

Is Wheat Street good ground (if so how so? If not how do we make it so)?

How do you prepare yourself, church and ministry to be good ground?

Mark 4:10-12

10 When Jesus was alone with the twelve apostles and some others, they asked him about these stories. **11** He answered:

I have explained the secret about God's kingdom to you, but for others I can use only stories. **12** The reason is,

"These people will look
and look, but never see.

They will listen and listen,
but never understand.

If they did,
they would turn to God,
and he would forgive them."

Those who are close to Jesus will see and hear differently than those who aren't. There are some who are around the church but don't know the savior, appreciate or understand Jesus' message. We have to see that some don't hear. We have to love them but not follow them because they are not following to or listening to Jesus.

Jesus is also explaining his teaching method. He has to teach in such a way to try to reach all and he is suggesting that story telling is a key part of his pedagogy. This is why we tell the story of the Gospel by telling stories about what God is doing through God's church. We have to tell our story so that others may know the story. Tell your story of then and now. Tell the story of what God has done in your life.

Mark 4:13-20

13 Jesus told them:

If you don't understand this story, you won't understand any others. **14** What the farmer is spreading is really the message about the kingdom. **15** The seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear the message. But Satan soon comes and snatches it away from them.

16 The seeds that fell on rocky ground are the people who gladly hear the message and accept it right away. **17** But they don't have any roots, and they don't last very long. As soon as life gets hard or the message gets them in trouble, they give up. **18** The seeds that fell among the thornbushes are also people who hear the message. **19** But they start worrying about the needs of this life. They are fooled by the desire to get rich and to have all kinds of other things. So the message gets choked out, and they never produce anything.

20 The seeds that fell on good ground are the people who hear and welcome the message. They produce thirty or sixty or even a hundred times as much as was planted.

What type of ground are you?

What type of ground is Wheat Street leadership?

How do we become "good ground"?

Mark 4:21-23

21 Jesus also said:

You don't light a lamp and put it under a clay pot or under a bed. Don't you put a lamp on a lampstand? **22** There is nothing hidden that will not be made public. There is no secret that will not be well known. **23** If you have ears, pay attention!

Here Jesus is referencing vs. 11-12. His true goal is to reveal the truth, to share and be the light. But persons must listen, pay attention and heed God's word and way. As for us we must heed God's word for us and for the church, God's word for God's church.

Mark 4:24-25

24 Listen carefully to what you hear! The way you treat others will be the way you will be treated—and even worse. **25** Everyone who has something will be given more. But people who don't have anything will lose what little they have.

We have to choose what we hear, what we choose to listen to and who we allow to speak into our lives.

Who are you listening to?

Who should you listen to more?

Who should you listen to less?

Who do you need to stop listening to?

We have a choice to not hear and or disregard what people say that isn't healthy for us spiritually. We also have to make sure we feed our spirits with things that grow us spiritually. We have seek to grow up in God and a big part of this is the things we hear from God, take to heart and respond accordingly.

The way we treat others is a direct relationship to how we will be treated. We must treat others better than they treat us. While God is not calling us to be doormats, Jesus is saying that we are not to expect people to fully reciprocate the kindness and love you show them. We show love and are loving because that who God is and act is who God calls us to be. This doesn't mean we don't speak up and hold people accountable. To speak up, be honest and hold people accountable is being loving.

While in verse 25 Jesus is saying that those who have heard and heeded the will and word of God will continue to grow and those who haven't and will not will continue to go in the other direction.

Mark 4:26-27

26 Again Jesus said:

God's kingdom is like what happens when a farmer scatters seed in a field. **27** The farmer sleeps at night and is up and around during the day. Yet the seeds keep sprouting and growing, and he doesn't understand how. **28** It is the ground that makes the seeds sprout and grow into plants that produce grain. **29** Then when harvest season comes and the grain is ripe, the farmer cuts it with a sickle.

Jesus comes back to the sowing and reaping principle. Here we see again that the ground makes the difference. The ground must be prepared to grow. If the soil and field is not adequately prepared the harvest will not sprout and grow. The ground:

1. Prayer
2. Faith - real faith that, leads to action of faith, that lead to glorifying God
3. Fasting
4. Rooted in God's Word - deep roots
5. Rooted in God's way - deep roots
6. Ministry that makes a real difference in the lives of real people
7. Missional focused - reaching outside the church to be the church
8. Rooted in love that leads to action that makes a difference
9. Embracing the new crop, the new season, the next chapter
10. Etc....

Mark 4:30-32

30 Finally, Jesus said:

What is God's kingdom like? What story can I use to explain it? **31** It is like what happens when a mustard seed is planted in the ground. It is the smallest seed in all

the world. 32 But once it is planted, it grows larger than any garden plant. It even puts out branches that are big enough for birds to nest in its shade.

Don't despise the small because when the small is fully submitted to God, God will grow it. God delights in mustard seeds!!

Mark 4:33

33 Jesus used many other stories when he spoke to the people, and he taught them as much as they could understand. **34** He did not tell them anything without using stories. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them.

There has to be a place where leaders of the church gather to talk about the deeper things of God. We have to seek God's move for God's church and how God is calling us to see and hear in the spiritual realm. Jesus required more of the Disciples but he also poured into them.

How are you pouring into those God has called you to lead?

How are you pulling those who are in leadership aside to make sure they see the deeper things of God?

Sunday Sermon: Keeping Calm in the Midst of a Storm

Mark 4:35-41

35 That evening, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the east side." **36** So they left the crowd, and his disciples started across the lake with him in the boat. Some other boats followed along. **37** Suddenly a windstorm struck the lake. Waves started splashing into the boat, and it was about to sink.

38 Jesus was in the back of the boat with his head on a pillow, and he was asleep. His disciples woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're about to drown?"

39 Jesus got up and ordered the wind and the waves to be quiet. The wind stopped, and everything was calm.

40 Jesus asked his disciples, "Why were you afraid? Don't you have any faith?"

41 Now they were more afraid than ever and said to each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"