



Message Discussion Guide Week of April 7, 2024

Message: Walking the Talk, Part 1: The Soil of our Hearts

Key Scriptures: [Mark 4:1-20](#)

Preacher: Tom Parkinson

Message Highlights:

One of the most common criticisms of Christians is that we are hypocrites who do not practice what we preach.

- It's a fair criticism because there are many examples of Christians saying and doing things that aren't Christlike.
- A root, a hypocrite pretends to be something they are not. When we own up to our failures and shortcomings, we avoid hypocrisy.

Jesus lived perfect life, and was not a hypocrite. He walked the talk – his words and actions were perfectly in sync.

Jesus taught in parables, which are short stories that use everyday imagery to illustrate a spiritual truth. Parables are meant to challenge us, providing us to respond.

There are three components to the parable of the sower:

1. The farmer (Jesus)
2. The seed (the word of Christ)
3. The soil (the heart of the hearer)

Jesus identifies four types of soil that align with conditions of our hearts.

1. Hard-packed – We are so calloused by lies we believe that the truth cannot get through.
2. Rocky – Our faith is only surface level, and is not deep enough to last through hardships.
3. Weed-infested – We are so distracted and consumed by worries and worldly things that our faith has no room to grow.
4. Fertile – Our hearts are open to being changed by the word of Christ.

In order to have fertile soil in our hearts we must be willing to have our hearts turn over, rocks and weeds uprooted, and to inside our hearts with vital nutrients like prayer and scripture.

Discussion Questions:

1.) Why do you think Christians are so commonly accused of being hypocrites? Is this a fair criticism?

2.) What prevents you from “practicing what you preach?” Which of your beliefs are the most difficult for you to live out?

3.) [Read Mark 4:1-20](#)

a. Why does Jesus tell parables?

b. What is the primary lesson Jesus is trying to teach in this parable?

c. How does this parable challenge and/or inspire you?

4.) Review the four types of soil. Which best describes your heart today? Can you think of times when your heart has been like all four types?

5.) What does it mean to have your heart turned over and nutrients added? What are some things you can do to make your heart fertile soil for the message of Jesus?

6.) What is your primary takeaway from this message?