

## Assess Where You Are

### “The Necessity of Good Soil”

Luke 8:4-15 (New International Version)

### CONSIDER

As we prepare to discuss the scripture today, we acknowledge that some may question the credibility of the farmer who is sharing by planting the seed and the seed itself that is being planted in the different soil.

Consider the people who have shared religious things during your personal experiences. **Share positive and/or negative experiences you personally had during your interactions with religious leaders.**

Now consider your trust in the Word of God being shared. **In what ways has popular culture and different world religions affected your VIEW of accepting God’s Holy Scriptures as the Word of God?**

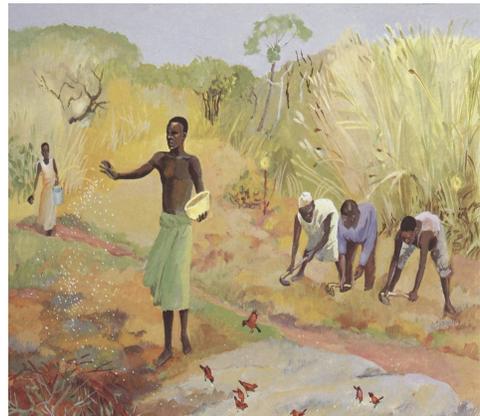
This story uses the language of culture. At this time agriculture dominated everyone’s world view. Here Jesus uses an agricultural analogy to talk about the heart condition of those following after Him. We all have negativity within our own lives that could affect our ability to understand the truth we are trying to receive if we are not careful.

**Consider your own interactions with scripture, religion, church, faith in Jesus to heal or provide, campus based ministries, spiritual leaders, etc. Share about how those interactions have affected your willingness to receive the word of God.**

*Our personal journeys with spiritual matters differ based on upbringing, new insights, doubts, etc. We believe all scripture has some truths we can discover even if we question its credibility. We invite you to enter the text having a posture that both the farmer and seed are credible, and that there are applicable truths you can received from this particular scripture.*

### READ

<sup>4</sup> While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: <sup>5</sup> “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. <sup>6</sup> Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.”



When he said this, he called out, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

<sup>9</sup> His disciples asked him what this parable meant. <sup>10</sup> He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, “though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.’

<sup>11</sup> “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup> Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. <sup>13</sup> Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. <sup>14</sup> The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. <sup>15</sup> But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

## DISCUSS

- As the seed was sowed, it was not the seed itself that differed, but instead the soil types that varied. Verse 11 identifies the seed as the word of God, while the rest of the parable presents four different soils types. These soil types are no soil or the path, rocky soil, thorny soil, and good soil. Each soil type represent the hearts of the various people hearing the teachings from Jesus. What draws us to sometimes search for other outlets of truth?
- Jesus’s audience that day included His twelve disciples and the crowds of people representing every soil type presented in this parable. All who followed Jesus throughout His ministry continued to hear the SAME words from Jesus, but their resulting actions differed based on their heart condition. In your own words, describe what happens to the seed when planted in each soil type. Share examples of times your heart condition was a representation of the different soil types.
- When you consider the analogy to agriculture, the reality is all soil can become good soil. With the right tool you can break up the shallow soil, remove the rocks from the rocky soil, and pull the weeds from the thorny soil, making each soil fertile for planting and producing. Maybe as thorny soil your anxiety caused you to run in fear from what God was calling you to do. In response you are using the tool of counseling to dig up the weeds choking the life out of you. Using your past soil type stories shared and the example given, identify a “tool” that could have turned your unproductive soil good.
- Jesus desired for people to hear His word and respond in a way that allowed for crop production. Unfortunately large crowds continued to gather, but only few had fertile hearts ready to produce. What does it look like to multiply what we receive from the Lord? Why is important to remember during your interactions with others, that they also have different heart soil types? How would it transform your life and the lives of those around you to have a heart ready for produce at all times?

## RESPOND

*We invite for you to respond in a way that speaks to transformation and affirmation of Black culture, turns your attention to the Black community on your campus, and focuses on your impact to your home community.*

Jesus's hope is that all of His followers would be good soil. This, however, is not automatic. To be good soil, we must first assess our current realities, identify which soil type we are, choose the proper tool(s) to create a more fertile soil, and then allow the tool to do its work. Today we want to consider the unproductive soils within black culture, our black campus community, and our home community and discuss ways we might help to turn the soil good.

As we recognize the necessity of good soil within **Black culture** to allow for productivity, below is an assessment and examples of each soil type as it relates to Black culture.

**Path Soil:** One devil that chokes up the seed within black culture is the perversion of Christianity through colonialism.

**Rocky Soil:** The time of testing causing some to fall away is most evident when the threat of repercussion causes individuals to shrink away from sharing the truth.

- Non-Black roommate/friend may make a hardcore statement about something in the black community. When you have the opportunity to say something, the cost of jeopardizing the connection causes you fall away from giving the truth you have received.
- Blasting stuff on social media and trump sprayed painted all over campus. You know this is an issue but choose to fight seemingly easy religious values like sin and fall away from dealing with the issue of injustice which is connected to a holistic view of scripture.

**Thorny Soil:** When health and wealth gospel ties one's faith in God solely on perceived blessings through one's material possessions, it makes it hard to feel as though you have connection to God when you don't have things. For many, even outside the realm of church and spirituality, our value in black culture is tied to materialism. All of these things choke us up and prevents maturation.

Colonialism, the threat of repercussion, and materialism has normalized being dysfunctional as our culture. **Discuss what truths we need to believe about the black community to allow for us to become more productive as a people.**

As we recognize the necessity of good soil within **Black college students and/or faculty** to allow for productivity, below is an assessment/example of each soil as it relates to the Black campus community.

**Path Soil:** One devil that chokes up the seed within the black campus community is anti-scriptural sentiments one receives from professors, classwork, websites, social media, friends, youtube, etc.

Rocky Soil: The time of testing causing some to fall away is most evident with the fear of rejection which causes individuals to shrink away from truth.

- Rejection from Friends
- Rejection from Organizations
- Rejection from Other Campus Ministries

Thorny Soil: The pressures from life's responsibilities can push one to become distracted from that which could advance the Black voice in spaces it is most needed on campus.

- Responsibility of providing financially for you and/or your family
- Responsibility of being a solid or effective Black leader on a campus where you are being pulled by so many different organizations
- Responsibility of being the first person in your family to go and/or graduate from college

Anti-scriptural sentiments, fear of rejection, and personal responsibility has slowed our Christian voice within the black campus community. **Discuss how our black campus community suffers with the absence of our prophetic voice.**

As we recognize the necessity of good soil within our **home community** to allow for productivity, below is an assessment and examples of each soil type as it relates to Black culture.

Path Soil: One devil that chokes up the seed within our homes could be the people that know you most who use who you were with them in the past to justify why they don't want to be influenced by you.

Rocky Soil: The time of testing causing some to fall away is most evident when the lack of information causes individuals to shrink away from the truth.

Thorny Soil: When guilt arises from regret of personal actions, it can stunt your growth and pull you away from wanting to be an influence.

- Guilt from falling to temptations
- Guilt from not making the most of an opportunity
- Guilt from letting your family down due to poor academics, decisions you made, etc.

People who know you, lack of information, and guilt can frustrate your desire to influence your home communities. **Discuss methods of communal accountability for personal affirmation to strengthen your witness as you invest in your home community.**

## CLOSE

Assess your current reality. Which soil type best describes where your heart is right now? What tools might God be inviting you to consider using? What next step can you take over the next week to allow the proper tool to create a more fertile good soil ready to receive from the Lord?