

Beyond Sunday

8.2.2026 — The Storyteller

Four Soils, One Truth: Finding Fruitful Ground — Matthew 13:1–23 — Dan Perkins

Gather

These questions help build connections with others as you share personal experiences.

1. If you had to describe your current season of life using a gardening image (planting, pruning, weeding, harvest, drought, etc.), what would it be and why?
2. Think of someone who has helped you grow spiritually. What was it about them that made you receptive to what they shared?

Grow

These questions guide your group through Scripture from Sunday's sermon, sharing observations that lead to greater understanding of God's Word and His work in our lives.

Read Matthew 13:1–23 together.

- 1. What stands out to you about the farmer?**
 - What seems surprising about the way he scatters the seed?
 - What does this teach us about God's generosity and His desire for everyone to hear His Word?
- 2. Jesus explains that the seed is the same in every situation—the difference is the condition of the soil.**
 - Which of the four soils do you see described in the passage?
 - The hardened path
 - Rocky ground
 - Thorny ground
 - Good soil
 - What characterizes each heart condition, and what prevents (or enables) spiritual growth?

3. Jesus describes three different obstacles to receiving God's Word.

- A hardened heart that resists truth
- A shallow faith that lacks deep roots
- A distracted heart consumed by worry or competing priorities
- Which of these do you think is most common in our culture today? Why?

4. Read Hosea 10:12 and James 1:22.

- What practical habits help cultivate a receptive heart?
- Why is hearing God's Word not enough without obedience?

5. Jesus says that good soil produces fruit.

Read Galatians 5:22–23.

- What kinds of fruit should become visible in the life of someone who is growing in Christ?
- Which fruit do you long to see God grow more deeply in your own life?

Give / Go

These questions help us apply the sermon takeaways of how we will give back to God and go share what we've learned through application and life change.

Thinking over the Scripture we reviewed...

How does this apply?

Looking honestly at your own heart, which "soil" best describes where you are today? What led you to that conclusion?

Take a faithful step this week.

The sermon offered several practical ways to cultivate good soil:

- Practice confession.
- Choose curiosity over certainty.
- Spend more time in Scripture than in media.
- Take a Sabbath from news and social media.
- Deepen your roots through Christian community.
- Begin each day by asking God to make your heart receptive.

Which one of these practices will you intentionally commit to this week? How can your group encourage you?

Prayer

Prayer Direction

Spend a few moments in silent reflection, asking God to reveal the true condition of your heart. Invite the Holy Spirit to soften places that have become hardened, deepen areas of shallow faith, and clear away distractions that compete for your attention.

You may close by praying together from **Psalm 51:10**:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Prayer Question

How can our group be praying for you this week as you seek to become more receptive to God's Word and bear lasting fruit?

Going Deeper

If you're interested in exploring this week's themes a bit deeper, check out one of these resources:

Book

- ***Renovation of the Heart*** by Dallas Willard
- <https://a.co/d/0bU561O9>

Video

- ***The Bible Project – Parables of Jesus***
- <https://bibleproject.com/videos/how-to-read-the-bible-the-parables-of-jesus/>

Article

- ***Why did Jesus Speak in Parables*** by The Bible Project
- <https://bibleproject.com/articles/are-the-parables-of-jesus-confusing-on-purpose/>