



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend, Jesus speaks to us about seeds. He tells the parable of the sower sowing seed. The seed falls on the path, rocky ground, thorny ground and good ground (see Matthew 13:3-9). Happily for us, the disciples don't always understand what Jesus is saying and so they ask Him about it. Jesus then tells them (and us) what this parable means (Matthew 13:18-23).

There are two things I want to point out in this parable. The first is recklessness of how the "seed" (the word) is distributed. The sower sows the word on every type of soil. This is terrible farming, but **incredible mercy**. No farmer would waste his seed on bad soil – he would make sure that he would sow the precious seed in soil that could receive it. Yet God loves us so much that He is *reckless* with His sowing! He speaks His word to *all* people, whether they (we) are able to receive it or not! He is so merciful and speaks to us (in so many different ways) because He wants, He longs, He pines for us to be with Him, to receive His love, to give ourselves to Him as He gives Himself to us.

The second point is: how we receive His word is important. When looking at the different types of soil (the path – the hardened heart; the rocks – no depth; the thorns – choked by worldliness; good soil – bears fruit), we're not talking about different people (which could become an "us and them" situation), but different points in our own lives.

I know there are times in my life when I have rejected God's word on a particular point because I did not want to change my life; it was easier to stay as I was. Because I spurned God's word, it was taken. But there are also times when the word does enter in, but may not have the roots it needs. I think about how fasting (a biblical mandate) looks so appealing, and when I hear of it, my desire springs up immediately... until I get hungry! When it suddenly becomes hard, it is easy to fall away.

Other times, worldliness chokes God's word in my life. While I know that God calls me to spend my time close to the Heart of Christ, fear or anxiety can remove my peace. Other times, too much YouTube or playing games can give the word of God a "blandness" that makes me turn more to the world and less to God.

Yet other times, I have found that I am receptive to God's word, and I am able to turn to God and away from worldliness, staying strong even through the trials.

With all of this, I have found that I need to cultivate the soil of my heart (to continue the analogy). This means *work*! It isn't easy, but it is necessary in order to bear fruit. Jesus asks us to look at our lives and see if we need to soften our hearts from the headstrong pride that keeps us from listening to His word of love. He encourages us to dive into the soil and remove the rocks that keep us from getting good roots. He strengthens us to pull out the weeds, the thorns that choke our desire for Him. We continually have to cultivate the soil of our lives!

I encourage you today to ask Jesus to take you by the hand and help you see what work needs to be done in your own soul. Ask Him: What do I need to do or to surrender, to allow you to plant your word in my life? He longs to draw us close to His Heart, but it means that we need to have "good soil" to receive Him.