



**Peat Moss or Fill Dirt  
Luke 8:4-15  
Westport Christian Church  
June 6, 2010**

When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: "The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up.

"Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.

"Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out.

"Other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant.

And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND. "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

"Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.

"Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.

"The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. (Luke 8:4-15NASU)

A few months ago I received a seed catalog in the mail. Ever since then I have been looking through it trying to determine what I wanted to plant in the garden this year. As a matter of fact, I was in Greensburg picking up a prescription for Ronda and there was a seed display right in the center of the isle. While I was looking at the seeds, some other people stopped and began to look as well. Soon, the conversation turned to planting, then to harvesting and of, course eating.

Since Ronda and I have been married, I have tried to put out some kind and size of a garden every year. I have noticed that some years were better than others when it came to harvesting the vegetables. The way the plants produced some years was incredible and other years, well not quite as well. People who put out a garden will often talk about the how their gardens did or did not do. During a good year we talk about our braggers. During the years when things don't produce as well, we talk about things like the amount of rain that did or did not come--If we used old seed or bought new seed--how hot or cold the weather had been--if the bugs were bad, and many other strange things.

Yes, it is true that much of the things that we either blame for a bad year or give credit to for a good year does have some merit, however, one thing that we often over look is the condition of the soil. You see, we can have the right amount of rain, the right amount of sunshine, with no bugs and still have a poor return. Much of what determines the results of our labor is the type or condition of our soil. From one end of a garden to the other many vary due to the soil.

In our text Jesus is wanting us to see the same is true in our spiritual life as well. Jesus often talked about soil, and He used it as a comparison to our hearts. Often we think about the Sower from this passage, but today I want us to consider the soil.

I would like for us to examine our lives today and see by the life that we are living, the things that we are involved in, so that we may see what type of soil we are so that we can make adjustments to stay spiritually alive for the Master Gardener.

The first type we will call . . .

## I. THE HARD SOIL

Here Jesus painted a picture of soil that had become hardened, packed down under the feet of men. The seed could not take root and the birds simply came along and ate it up. This reminds me of a wedding. If they throw out bird seed it's not long after everyone has left that the birds come in and soon it's all gone.

The hard soil is the person who has allowed the things of this world to harden their heart. When we hear this part of the parable, we cannot dismiss it by simply concluding: well, this is a reference to some old reprobate. Friends, we must be careful because we could all fall in this category. We often allow the problems of life to harden our hearts. Do you know how a callous is formed? It isn't formed all at once, but over a period of time. Perhaps from some kind of hurt. An unkind word, some slanderers remark, a bad business deal, a bad marriage, a bad childhood, I mean the list can go on and on. It is easy to become hardened in life.

Show a noble goal to a cynic and he will see a hidden agenda. Offer the cynic a compliment and he suspects manipulation. Offer him an idea and he will be the first one to tell you: We've tried it--it didn't work. The Gospel will not take root in that atmosphere. Something has to break up that hard-crusted top veneer that most of us have developed. (Source unknown)

The problem is that our heart becomes so hard that the seed of the Gospel cannot take root in the hardened heart. We must be careful we don't become hard-crusted.

The next type of soil, we will call . . .

## II. THE SHALLOW SOIL

This is perhaps the person whose belief is built upon emotions and not the truth of the Word. They do not look to the Word, but goes by what feels right or feels good. In the Sixties there was a saying that went "If it feels good do it", but we must remember just because something may feel good or appears on the outside as good doesn't make it right.

The sun on this soil will soon make the plant wither and die because there are no existing roots! The sun is the trials of life that will come our way, the testing of our faith. "knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." James 1:3

We must allow our roots to grow deep into the Word of God to produce the type of roots that leads us beyond our trials. "So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love." (Eph 3:17) We must not be like the foolish man that built his house upon the sand, but like the wise man who built upon the Rock of Jesus Christ.

Those who build upon the sand, emotions and concepts of life will not be able to withstand the troubles one will face. It's easy to give up when challenged or difficult

times come. Don't be shallow, add some substance to your walk, the truths of God's Word.

The next type of soil, we will call . . .

### III. THE CROWDED SOIL

This is the one who is not totally committed to Christ and the ways of God., who has not totally surrendered all their life to Him. They have not taken the time to weed out the things in their life that hinders them from the will of God. Pleasures, self-satisfactions, wealth, worries of life are just a few of the things that can easily distract and fill up those who are in this category.

One day a certain rich man who lived a miserable life visited a rabbi. The rabbi took the rich man by the hand and led him to a window. "Look out there," he said. The rich man looked into the street, "What do you see?" asked the rabbi. "I see men, women, and children," answered the rich man. Again the rabbi took him by the hand and this time led him to a mirror. Now what do you see?" "Now I see myself," the rich man replied. Then the rabbi said, "Behold, in the window there is a glass, and in the mirror there is a glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered with a little silver, and no sooner is the silver added than you cease to see others, and you see only yourself." Just like the rich man we must take our eyes off of self and put them on the cross. (Source Unknown)

You know what our problem is. We suffer from junk overload. It is not necessarily that we are doing bad things. In fact, most of us are doing good things. The problem is that when these good and wholesome things crowd out better things in our life like our time with God and our brothers and sisters, then they become a stumbling block and a snare. The thorns and briars of business have a tendency to choke out the kingdom of God within us. We don't allow ourselves time for reflection and prayer. We don't allow ourselves time for worship. Why? Because we are busy. We need to make room, and not allow God to be crowded out!

The last type of soil that we will look at, is the . . .

### IV. THE GOOD SOIL

The good soil represents the one who gets into the Word of God, who acts like a sponge and soaks it in. The one who applies it to their life not for a short period, but continues God's work and seeking His Word for understanding. The one who shows proof by patiently producing fruit. Not everyone will produce the same amount of fruit. Jesus didn't say that everyone would produce that same amount or the same kind of fruit. But all believers will produce some fruit of evidence of their spiritual life.

Paul writes, "so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in

all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light." (Col 1:10-12 NASU)

Conclusion: A.W. Tozer once said, "Faith is not a matter of I.Q. or education, it is a matter of humbly preparing the heart to receive God's truth."

In the book, "Crazy love," by Francis Chan, he writes, "Do not assume you are the good soil." "Has your relationship with God actually changed the way you live? Do you see evidence of God's kingdom in your life? Or are you chocking it out slowly by spending too much time, energy, money, and thought on the things of this world? Do not assume you are the good soil."

So the question that I must ask is, "what type of soil are you, peat moss or fill dirt?"

If you are the hard type then you need to allow yourself to be chisel plowed, breaking down that hard crust that has been packed down. Ask God to soften you so that you can receive His word. If you are the shallow type, then let me encourage you to stop living off of emotions and get into His Word. Build your faith on His truths.

If you are the crowd soil, then reevaluate what you are involved in and what is truly important in your life

If you are of the good soil then let me encourage you to keep producing fruit for the kingdom! Reach out and help those in need. Pray for those who are hard and share with them the Living water that will soften them. Pray for those who are shallow and encourage them to study and discover the rich nourishment they need. Pray and help those who are crowd to see that a person can be happy and enjoy life without all the things the world says you need.

No matter what type of soil you are, I pray that the seed, God's Word penetrates you heart so that you discover the most important thing of all, Jesus Christ.

AMEN