

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of September 26, 2021

Sowing in the Right Places, Matthew 13:1-8

Pastor Temple- 8:30 & 10:30 Contemporary, Pastor Conway- 10:30 Traditional

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events or faith experiences since you last met?

- Are there joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- **Opening Discussion Question-** What do you believe are the biggest barriers for someone growing spiritually in Christian faith today?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the scriptures from this week's sermon message and then discuss the questions which follow as time allows. There are more questions than you will have time for, so it is ok to be selective.

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear."

¹⁸ "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

1. If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

2. Verses 1-3 set the scene of Jesus sharing the parable and the parable itself. Why do you believe Jesus used agricultural metaphors in speaking about the kingdom of heaven to this crowd?
3. How did the first three soils represent obstacles to full life in the kingdom of heaven and fruitful faith?
 - Hard Path (verses 4 and 18-19)
 - Rocky Soil (verses 5-6 and 20-21)
 - Soil with Thorns (verses 7 and 22)
4. How does the fourth soil represent successfully overcoming the first three obstacles and adding a new element of life in the kingdom of heaven as well?
5. Pastor Temple shared a story about a suicidal man who stumbled upon a football stadium in which Terry Bradshaw was sharing his testimony which led to his conversion and becoming a Christian evangelist. How do stories like this demonstrate the role of human agency as well as the acts of the Holy Spirit that result in people becoming fruitful discipleship of Jesus Christ?
6. Why did Jesus only offer explanations of His parables to the disciples and not the crowds? How did one become a disciple?

Other Related Readings (10 min)

1. In between the passages above, Jesus explained to the disciples why he spoke to crowds in parables and only explained them fully afterwards in smaller settings to those more committed to him. In Matthew 13:13-16, Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10; “though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand...”.
2. Would a volunteer please read aloud all of Isaiah chapter 6 (verses 1-13). How does this calling story of Isaiah communicate the holiness of God and the sinfulness of the people?
3. How does the message that Isaiah is given to share show the consequences of human choices and what it takes for some to wake up and choose differently?
4. What might Jesus have been indirectly referencing in verse 13?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)

1. As you reflect upon the sermon and the scripture readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
2. Which of the barriers to fruitful faith in the kingdom of heaven do you believe is the greatest threat to fruitful faith in you? Is it different than what you shared in the opening discussion question?
3. What measures could be taken this week to better cultivate “planted, persevering, prioritizing and producing faith” in our hearts?
4. What times and settings tend to work the best for your spending time with Jesus and talking with other disciples about the will of God for the world and your life or being engaged in Christian service?
5. Have you considered signing up to in the Change The World Weekend at Christ Church this weekend?

Witness and Closing (10 minutes)

- Are there people around you who are less experienced in Christian faith whom you are helping to grow as a disciple by example or through conversation?
- What names of people around you can the group lift up in closing prayer to be growing in the family of God?
- A volunteer may conclude by leading the group in prayer about the joys and concerns shared earlier in the meeting