

MATTHEW 13:1-23

“THE SOWER AND THE SOILS”

MARCH 9, 2025

SUMMARY

Lent is about disruption. It upends our otherwise normal lives by reminding us of our human frailty, sin, and need for a savior. To embrace Lent’s disruptions, we will study the Parables, stories that Jesus tells to communicate what the coming kingdom of God would be like.

Pastor Jeff explained that Parables are an amazing tool because they disrupt our default assumptions. The parables ask us to slow down, encourage us to reflect, provoke our imaginations, and invite us to see what God is doing from a new perspective. That is our hope for this series: that our savior will disrupt us so we can reorient ourselves around life with him.

This week, we focused on the “Sower and the Soils.” The Sower, being God, casts the seed of his Word into the soil of humanity’s heart. But the question is, what type of soil does the seed land in? In the parable, Jesus describes four kinds of people, or rather four types of “listeners,” and their responses to the Word of God.

Pastor Jeff said we think we “read” this parable, but it actually reads us. He challenged us to hear the parable, asking, “What kind of soil is my heart? Am I happy with the kind of listener I am?”

This question is important because when life with God is offered to us, it is our motivation to joy. Therefore, it should be of extreme importance, no matter how long we have walked with the Lord, that we tend to the soil of our hearts and seek the fruitful abundance that comes with it. Let’s dig into today’s text and seek to apply it to our lives.

DISCUSSION

Expand Our Awareness

- As we prepare for our Lenten series, what are you hopeful God “disrupts” for you?



This document can be used for either personal or group reflection.

Group facilitator: Please feel empowered to use only the questions that are helpful for the context of your group.

Extract the Truth

Read the text: Matt 13:1-9, 18-23

- What jumped out to you from the text that “disrupts” you today

Let's examine each of the types of listeners:

1. Non-Listeners: Those whose hearts are hard; Satan snatches the word away so they never really hear it. Pastor Jeff said these listeners are content to lack understanding. They are careless and never give themselves to much.

- What heart desires might cause someone to become a deaf listener?
- In what ways are you tempted to be “content to lack understanding” and become hard soil? Are there certain areas of your life where you're not sure you want to hear what God has to say?

2. Superficial listeners: Those with brief joy in the Gospel, but when trouble comes, it fades. Pastor Jeff said these listeners think faith means all will go well for them. Therefore, when hardship comes, they want nothing to do with it. They say, “I tried Jesus, but he let me down.”

- What heart desires might cause someone to become a superficial listener?
- In what ways are you tempted to think Jesus should shield you from hardship? How have difficulties stretched or tested your faith?

3. Distracted listeners: Those who are interested by God's word, but wealth and success interest them more. Pastor Jeff said these listeners are committed to Christ as long as it doesn't rival their pursuit of what they want: security, power, prestige, and passions.

- What heart desires cause someone to become a distracted listener?
- In what ways are you tempted to abandon Jesus when faith in him threatens your worldly desires? How does worry distract you from focusing on or following Jesus?

4. Fruitful listeners: Those who truly listen with joy and bear great fruit. Pastor Jeff said these are folks who are seeking an abundant life. They eagerly hear His word, nurture it, and bear fruit because they desire life with God.

- What heart desires cause someone to become a fruitful listener?
- What is most attractive about the life this type of listener lives?
- What must the listener let go of to gain the joy of a fruitful life with God?
- How have you seen God bless, encourage, help, teach, or grow others through you?

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Experience Transformation

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's sermon, and what is one thing you want to do differently in the power of the Holy Spirit?

Pray



**PREPARE FOR
NEXT WEEK:**

Luke 10:25-37