

## **YOUR SOIL ?**

Today's computerized precision agriculture addresses the natural variation in soils. Variation can exist not only in 80-acre fields but in your garden plot. It matters where the buffalo died!

In Luke 8:4-15 Jesus tells the famous parable of the seed and the sower, with the seed falling on the hard path, the rocky soil, the thorny ground, and the good soil which produced good yields. Christ Jesus is the sower, and He broadcasts the word of God to all kinds of people.

**FOUR SOILS** - Previously we saw how Jesus said seed doesn't take root in hard soil as it gets trampled or eaten by birds. Likewise in rocky ground, roots are shallow and when adversity comes the shoots do not produce fruit. Seed in thorny ground grows up with weeds.

Jesus says worldly cares and riches and pleasures can choke budding faith, so that it produces no fruit. Trials come by both adversity and prosperity. The false gospel of health-and-wealth falsely says believers should pursue worldly blessings. But Jesus warns in Matthew 6:24, "*You cannot serve both God and money. Do not be anxious about your life, but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things you need will be added to you.*"

**GOOD SOIL** - In verse 15, Jesus says, "*as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.*" Note well, this is the only soil of the four which bears fruit. If there is root in Christ, there will be Christ's fruit.

Jesus says in John 15, "*I am the vine, you are the branches, whoever abides in Me and I in Him, he it is who bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing*" and "*by this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples*" and "*I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide.*" In Matthew 13 and Mark 4, Jesus says some bear fruit 30-fold, some 60-fold, some 100-fold.

**PERSEVERING** - The good soil of the faith is about what theologians call the perseverance of the saints. This is God's preservation of His blood-bought children, adopted into union with Christ, and the bearing of God's fruit by the seed of the Word planted by the Spirit of Christ.

The fruit of a seed begins with germination, then it grows and bears fruit. For believers, the first phase is regeneration, being born again from above by the Spirit. The phase of sanctification is a believer growing in faith through trials. The word of God takes root, puts out shoots, and bears fruit, by the power of the Holy Spirit and grace of God. Believers persevere despite trials and persecution, trusting and obeying God's Word by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

**PRODUCING** - Spiritual birth will result in spiritual growth and spiritual fruit. This is the work of the Spirit of God. The same spiritual power that regenerates you to repentance and faith also enables you to grow, to trust and obey God's Word, and thereby to produce the fruits of faith.

This happens in the midst of trials, and as Scriptures teach us, the trials enhance the growth and strengthen the faith of the believer. Whenever the gospel is shared and the Word of God is read, there's opportunity for the Spirit of God to do His work. Ask God to open hearts and minds and wills so that hearers believe and receive, trusting Christ wholly as Christ, Lord, Savior.

Those who are regenerated by God will be sanctified and bear His fruit. As RC Sproul notes, "it is impossible to be a totally unproductive Christian." If there is God's root, there will be His fruit.

**PERCEIVING** - What's this look like in the soil of your life? Scripture exhorts us not to judge the Bible by your experience, but rather to judge your experience by the written Word of God. If you have ears to hear, then listen to what God's Word says. Hear it and heed it.

Are you hard soil? Hardening your heart against the truth and grace of God? Are you rocky soil? Professing faith, but resisting the water of life and nourishment of God's Word, not withstanding trials and bearing no fruit. Are you weedy soil? Shoots of faith are choked out by believing the lies of the world, the flesh, and the devil instead of the truth of God's sure promises.

Or, are you good soil? It's the only one producing a yield. The principle is, 'if root, then fruit.' God guarantees it. The converse is 'no fruit, then no root.' Will you trust what God says in His Word, obediently living it out by His power within, enduring through trials? That's the only way to bear His fruit. God's word has been planted in you today. Which soil will you be? ☐