

# Four Responses to the Gospel

## Mark 4:1-9, 14-20

*Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven...On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name..?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of iniquity.'* (Jesus, Matthew 7:21-23)

Jesus is describing \_\_\_\_\_ converts. Where will all of these false converts come from? The Parable of the Sower (or the Soils) helps fill in our understanding. This parable describes 4 responses to hearing the gospel.

- A note on sowing in Ancient Israel. They used the \_\_\_\_\_ method of sowing. I.e., they did not till the ground into rows and then plant the seed. They sowed the seed rather indiscriminately, after which they tilled the seed into the ground:

### The Resistant Response

- The path naturally would be a harder place.
- There are people who hear the gospel, & it goes in one ear & out the other.
- There are two ways people resist the gospel.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ **Resisting** – *These people are hard to the gospel & they know it. They hear the words & make arguments against the truth. Most of these people are very intelligent. Their minds have no trouble understanding; but their heart, like the path the sower used, is hard. Saul of Tarsus is a good example.*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ **Resisting** – *This is the majority of people who hear the gospel & don't respond. They just don't get it. It seems strange to them. They hear the gospel, maybe even many times, but that light-bulb just never goes off.*

### The Shallow Response

- Jesus describes it as seed which falls into a rocky area. This might be an area not far from the path that has a thin layer of top-soil.
- So the seed has an opportunity to lodge into the soil, but not enough soil to grow a root. With no root to retrieve \_\_\_\_\_ from the soil, the hot sun withers the plant.
- The sun represents tribulation or persecution.
- Clues that a false believer has shallow faith.
  - Instant \_\_\_\_\_ that is brief; it doesn't last.

- No desire to seek the nutrients needed to survive. What are those nutrients?
- Unwillingness to endure pain / tribulation.
  - *Tribulation* means “to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - When squeezed on Christ’s account, these false Christians do not endure.
  - Consider the Apostles. All 12 faced tribulation because of their faith in the word (11 murdered, 1 boiled in oil & exiled to a convicts’ island).
  - In February 2015, ISIS beheaded Egyptian Coptic Christians on a beach in Libya. The video shows them praying one last time before they all cry out in unison, “O my Lord Jesus” before their heads were severed.

### The Distracted Response

- The thorns are *the cares of this world & the deceitfulness of riches*. Luke adds *the pleasures of this life*.
- Many people who profess Christ actually worship other gods – \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.
- This is a powerful false gospel in America.
- What do you get when you preach a false gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

### The Genuine Response

- There really isn’t much here to explain except by way of contrast with the other three responses.
- The genuine response isn’t hard \_\_\_\_\_; it is prepared to receive the word of the gospel.
- The genuine response has \_\_\_\_\_, so that faith can take root, to the point of withstanding tribulation.
- The genuine response trusts in Jesus \_\_\_\_\_, & wins out over wealth and pleasure.
- But the greatest difference is that the genuine response bears \_\_\_\_\_. The amount of fruit doesn’t matter; some people will be more productive than others.

### Challenges for Us

1. \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves, to see whether you are in the \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Corinthians 13:5).
2. Do not give \_\_\_\_\_ hope to potentially false converts.
3. Sow that \_\_\_\_\_ seed.