



## Sermon Transcription • Luke 8:4-15 NIV

### Parable of the Sower

Pastor Greg Harris

**[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]**

We're starting a new sermon series. Usually we go through books of the Bible and we circle back and forth between Old Testament and New Testament books and different genres - Prophets, Psalms, history, Gospels - that kind of stuff. But once and a while we also think it's important for us to do more thematic sermon series, taking a look at particular ideas that are constantly repeated in Scripture. This sermon series is going to be looking at a doctrine that is often called the doctrine of perseverance or the perseverance of the saints (the idea that in order to have saving faith, one must persevere until the end or else they won't actually be saved.) So, we're going to look at various passages that actually teach this point. This morning we are going to start in the gospels. We're going to start in Luke chapter eight and we're going to look at the *Parable of the Sower*. As we look at this passage, we have to remind ourselves that the reason that farmers sow seed is so that they can reap a harvest, and we'll see in this passage that there is actually only one soil that is a part of the harvest at the end. Or in other words, there's only one soil that actually leads to salvation. So the way we are going to handle our time here this morning in Luke chapter eight is we're going to look at one story that Jesus tells and then we're going to walk through the four different soils that he explains as he talks about the story in more detail.

- 1) One Story
- 2) Four Soils

So we will look at the one story and then we will examine the four soils.

#### [One Story]

Let's get started. Luke chapter eight, let's look at the one story Jesus tells. We'll start in Luke 8:4. If you have a Bible, I encourage you to open it up to Luke chapter 8. If you don't, the Scripture will be on the screen for you. Luke 8 starting in verse 4 - here's the story:

“While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: ‘A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came



up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.' When he said this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

So Jesus tells a story to a big crowd about a farmer. So, in our mind, we have ideas about what farming looks like. In the first century, the historical background is that what a farmer would do is that he would go out to his field. When we hear the language of a path and rocky and thorny soil and good soil, we might have in our mind this idea that it would be obvious, right? Like, if you're at our Downes Road campus and you walk out to the back of our parking lot and you see there is like asphalt paths and then there's a sand pit for volleyball and there's green grass and you think, "Oh, it would be obvious to tell what kind of soil, as your walking, you'd actually be putting the seed on." But in this context, what's more likely the case is that the farmer is walking along on his field and it's not particularly obvious from his vantage point what the good soil actually is. This is made even more clear by the practice (in the first century) that farmers would sow their seed all over the place - just throwing it out there - and then later they would come back to actually plow the field. So instead of plowing first and then sowing, they would sow the seed, plow later, and then figure out (once the thing started to grow) what kind of soil did that seed fall on? So Jesus is using this very common scene, this very simple story --for an agricultural society to hear a story like this, that seeds falling on different kinds of soil produces different kinds of plants, is a very commonplace story for this large group of people to hear. We do have to remember that the context in this passage is that he is (Jesus is) talking to a really large group of diverse people. It tells us in verse four that people came from town after town. Earlier in Luke eight it tells us that Jesus' ministry was going through town after town preaching the gospel. So you have a large group of people from all over gathered together to hear the great Jesus - this public speaker that you've got to hear. His teachings are amazing. You've got to hear the story he tells. He stands before this large crowd and says, "You know how if you sow seed on different kinds of soil, different kinds of growth happens? Right. Make sense? Good." And you have a group of people looking --some of them get the message and their nodding their heads very piously, "Hmm amen. Preach." And there's other people who are like, "I feel like I'm supposed to understand the point of the story. I'm going to start nodding," right? The reality is that Jesus tells this very common story and then, at the end of the story, he says, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." Then, he turns to his disciples (or rather his disciples come to him) - Luke 8:9:

"His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, 'The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "Though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'"

So Jesus gives this very vague or very common story to a large group of people about sowing seed on different soils and that causing different kinds of growth for different plants. He says, "If you have ears to hear then hear it," and then his disciples come to him and say, "What was that all about? What are you getting after, Jesus?" So, he turns to his disciples now, not explaining to the large crowd, but he turns to his disciples about what he was actually communicating when he told that story. In Luke 8:11 he tells us that:

"...the meaning of the parable: [is that] The seed is the word of God."



So when we are understanding this story, the sower goes out to sow the seed and Jesus is saying that that seed that's being sown is the word of God (which is the good news of Jesus Christ and what his ministry is all about, and also what it means to listen to him when he's calling himself "our Lord" - what it means for us to follow him as Lord). That's the seed that's being sown.

### **[Four Soils]**

And now there's four soils. So now we are going to walk through the four different soils as Jesus explains the meaning of this parable that he told to the large crowd.

#### **Soil #1: Path**

First soil is the path. Luke 8:11, he says to the disciples,

"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved."

The sower goes out, the word of God goes out, the gospel goes forward, the message of Jesus and what it means to follow him goes out. Some people are path people and they hear that message, but they never actually believe it. The imagery here is of a bird coming and snatching away the seed, right? You're at Mill Lake and the sign says, "Don't feed the birds!" and you have your loaf of bread all ready and you're thinking, "I'm going to do this anyways," right? "No one is going to call the police. What are they going to do?" You start throwing the bread on the ground and all the birds (all the geese) come and start eating the loaf right off of the ground. This is the imagery - that the gospel is being preached, but before the seed can actually get in the soil there are birds. The devil comes and takes away the seed so that no one can actually say, "I believe that to be true." This is the path-people (the people who never actually have faith) and because they don't believe, they are not saved. This point of the story makes it crystal clear the necessary to believing the gospel in order to have salvation.

Now, it's important for us to take a minute and realize that it's not (in this instance) the quantity of belief that's being spoken about necessarily (as we're going to get to later when we talk about the perseverance of faith), but what's talked about here is the quality of faith, or a reality of faith being present. This is why when people talk about the thief on the cross --so when Jesus is being crucified - he came, he lived his life, he was killed on a cross for our sins in our place - while he is being crucified, he was crucified with two other guys - both criminals. One criminal is mocking Jesus and the other criminal is saying, "Don't mock him, he's actually the saviour." Jesus turns to this criminal whose being killed and he says to him, "You will be with me in paradise" because of the reality, the quality, of his belief. In other words - belief is necessary for salvation. We like taking that *thief on the cross* story and putting that kind of experience onto all kinds of different famous people, right? There's rumours that go around in Christian circles about famous atheists who have their deathbed conversions. So



much so, that some of the most famous atheists have gone out of their way saying, “I want to make sure that no one actually claims that happened to me.” Richard Dawkins was interviewed a few years ago and he said that he’s planning on filming his deathbed moments for the sole purpose of being able to prove to people that never once did he express faith in Jesus. Christopher Hitchens (another famous atheist who passed away a few years ago) said the very same thing. He said, “Look, if rumors start swirling that I have some *thief on the cross* kind of moment, don’t believe them.” When he passed away, reporters came to his widow and said, “Did he ever have a returning-to-Jesus moment?” and she said, “No. To the very end he was persistent in his viewpoints.” But what the *parable of the sower* and the path-soil tells us is that if there is no belief, there is no salvation. What matters is the quality and the reality of the faith. That if it is true that Dawkins and Hitchens never actually come to belief in the gospel, that there’s a distinct difference for eternity between the thief on the cross and the famous atheists.

The gravity of that situation should start striking us because it’s common for us to think, “You know what, it doesn’t matter. God’s going to get the people he wants at the end anyways. So if they die and they didn’t believe - whatever. It’s fine. I’m sure they were like a closet Christian or something. They didn’t actually have to have faith in Jesus. It’s not a big deal.” But the reality is that the only way to be saved is to actually have faith in Jesus. So look, the preacher in me can’t leave this moment lie because Jesus is talking to a big group of people and he says, “There’s people here to are like the path-people, who haven’t yet believed the gospel, so if you’re one of those people who haven’t believed the gospel yet, the reality is that you still have an opportunity to repent. You still have an opportunity to believe this gospel (this good news that even though you’re a rebel, God’s made a way for you to be reconciled and have a flourishing life for an eternity with Him the way you were meant to) if you’ll put your trust in Jesus. If you don’t, we have no hope for you.” Belief is necessary for salvation. The whole purpose of sowing seed is so that you can reap a harvest and the seed in this story represents the word of God. If the seed doesn’t actually ever grow, then there is no harvest. Where there is no faith, there is no salvation. So look, Jesus is talking to a large group of people and he says, “Some of them are like the path and they never actually receive the gospel. There’s only one soil that saves and the path is not it.”

## **Soil #2: Rocky**

Soil number two: the rocky soil. Luke 8:11:

“This is the meaning of the parable [he says to his disciples]: The seed is the word of God...[verse 13] Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.”

Jesus is saying, “Look, among this large group of people that just heard my story, there are the kind of people who are like the rocky soil. They will hear my message and they’ll respond with tears of joy at the good news of the gospel and they’ll say, ‘I believe that to be true.’ But the reality is that there is no room for the roots to grow down deep. So when trials come, they’re actually going to fall away.” So



imagine the kind of person who goes to a summer camp and they hear the gospel being preached in one of the chapels at the summer camp and with tears they come down to the altar and they profess faith in Christ and that the gospel is their only hope for salvation. They come and they profess that to be true, they believe with joy, but when the trials and sorrows of life come there's no roots and so they wither away. See, the reality is that suffering is either going to destroy or strengthen our faith. The testings and trials and sorrows and struggles and troubles of this life are like fire. They are either going to have a destructive effect or a purifying effect. There's no question that the troubles are coming. The question is: what kind of effect will the troubles have on the faith of the person who says with joy that they believe the gospel? See, in this passage, what the result is, is that the person who responds with joy at the gospel, the trouble comes and their faith withers away because there's no root. But, that's not the only experience the scriptures describe. James 1:2 says,

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking [in] anything.”

See, the reality is that the fire is coming. The testing, the trials, the struggles are coming. There's no question about that. The only question is: will it destroy our faith or will it refine it? See, I think one of the major goals in leadership is to help all of us prepare to deal with suffering. It's one of our main goals as elders and pastors and as people who preach the Bible, is to come to you and to say to you, “Your life will not always be easy” and for some of you that's not a very hard to thing to convince you of. For others, the trials may not have come yet, but they will. Look, I have to be honest with you, this is one of the main reasons why we will talk about, with some frequency, the prosperity and health-and-wealth preachers. Sometimes we'll name them and sometimes we won't, but the motive is not just to be contrarian and say, “We're different than those guys.” The motive is pastoral, because what they are saying to you is if you come to Jesus you will only have blessings, and then when the trials come, you'll look at God and say, “What is this for? This isn't what I signed up for.” See, they're deceiving us in telling us that the Christian life is going to one of always, every moment, blessing and joy and happiness. But, the reality is, that the struggles are coming, the trials are coming, the fire is coming. Jesus told his disciples in John 16 that you will have trouble. He guaranteed it. The question isn't: are we going to face troubles? The question is: what kind of effect will that have on our faith? Will it destroy it or will it refine it?

When my wife was in grade eleven, her father was in a very serious accident and was in the hospital for months and months trying to --well really, for a very long time it was unclear whether he was going to survive this accident or not. So obviously this is a massive moment for a teenage girl to have her father in hospital, visiting him day after day with him non-responsive after this accident. One of her youth leaders came up to her in one of those early days and said to her, “Look, we will pray and stand with you and pray that your father is healed.” And then he looked right at her and said, “But I have to ask you a question. If he's not, what are you going to do? Are you going to turn away from God or are you going to run to Him?” See, the job of Christian leadership is to ask that question. It's not to promise you sunshine and roses every single day, but to look at you in the eye and ask you the question: when the fire comes, will you run from God or run to Him? The fire is coming and the reality



is that there are those like the people in the rocky soil, who even though they came with joy and with tears and belief, when the struggles came, they, with tears, looked to God and said, “This is not what I signed up for,” and they had their faith wither away.

But the other option is that when those struggles and trials and sorrows come, you, with tears in your eyes, hit your knees and you say what the Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:8-17, where he said,

“We are [afflicted in every way], but not crushed; perplexed, but not [driven to] despair; persecuted, but not [forsaken]; stuck down, but not destroyed...[so] we do not lose heart. Though [our outward self is] wasting away, yet [our inward self is] being renewed day by day. For [this] light and momentary [affliction is preparing] for us an eternal [weight of] glory [beyond all comparison].”

Look, that verse is crucial because we’re not saying that the struggles and trials in our life aren’t afflictions, but in reality to what is coming for a joy and eternity, these sorrows that bombard us are light and momentary compared to the weight of the glory that awaits. The question is not: are the trials going to come? The question is: what effect will it have on our faith? See, those people Jesus was addressing in the large crowd, there were people there that were rocky-soil people. That the word of God would be believed at one point, but then once things got harder they would wither away. So there’s only one soil that leads to salvation and the rocky ground is not it.

### **Third Soil: Thorns**

The third soil is the thorns. Luke 8:11-14:

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God...[in verse 14] The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.”

“So here’s another group of people,” Jesus says, “that are out there in that large crowd. Some people are going to hear the word that I say and they are going to receive it and they’re going to respond with joy (like the rocky soil people did) but their faith is never actually going to mature. The reason isn’t because of the troubles of life, the reason is because their faith is choked out by all the good things in life.” All the things that we place our minds on and think about and dwell on and pursue (the worries, riches, and pleasures of this life) will choke out our faith so that the plant won’t actually be part of the harvest.

See, I don’t know if we (in the West and in the 21st Century and in an affluent area like the suburbs of Vancouver) realize that the good things in life are dangerous. I think we mostly operate with the viewpoint that, look, if we have good things it’s because we are \*hashtag\* blessed: it’s the vacation, it’s the boat, it’s the car, it’s the house, it’s the girl, it’s the kids, it’s the grandkids. “I’m so blessed. These are all such great gifts from God,” and they are, but they are also choking hazards, right? The good things in life - the riches, the pleasures, the things that give us joy - could also be the very things



that choke out our faith. You know that toy that your child got at Christmas that says, “Don’t give to anyone under three because it’s a choking hazard”? That’s the riches and pleasures of this world. It’s a choking hazard. Is it necessarily going to kill you? No. Is it potentially? Yup. It’s a choking hazard. That nice house that you want so desperately; that nice boat that you want to desperately; those good things in your life that you’re pursuing - are they going to kill your faith? Maybe not, but maybe. It’s a choking hazard.

See, one of the primary ways that people will persevere in the faith is by continuing to gather with other Christians. And yet, we are very often finding ourselves in situations where we would prefer to spend our time on a part of life that brings us joy and pleasure - a good thing - like sports and arts and other areas of the good creation that God has given to us. We would prioritize and want to pursue those good pleasures more than we want to pursue things that would help us mature in our faith. See, the problem with this soil is that the plant couldn’t mature. Yeah, there was belief at one point, but then it got choked out because of all the other kinds of priorities and ways you spend your time. So, attending church is not just something you do on your calendar. It’s one of the ways that you’ll mature and ensure that the other parts of this world and this life don’t actually choke out your faith, because they are choking hazards. Some of you guys might be thinking, “Look, we’re already, like, actually sitting in a church, so like, relax,” right? [laughter]. But look, these sermons go online and there are people that are out there that listen to these sermons online as their only way of really connecting with Christian things. The rest of their schedule and life is prioritized on all kinds of good things. Don’t hear me saying that sports and arts and all other kinds of areas of life and joys and pleasures are bad things. They’re not. They’re good things, but they’re choking hazards, and if the only way that you’re maturing in your faith is once and a while listening to a podcast while you drive from one game to the next practice, from one event to the next event, all I’m saying is that you’re dealing with a choking hazard. It might not kill your faith or it might not kill the faith of your child, but it could.

Jesus is talking to a big group of people and he says, “Look, there is the kind of people who will come to faith in me, but won’t ever mature because they’re too fixated on the good things of this world.” Their faith is choked out and the plant doesn’t actually grow. Look, the whole reason that farmers sow seed is to reap a harvest and the seed in this story represents the word of God. If the plant gets choked out, there’s nothing to actually harvest. So, Jesus is talking to a big group of people and he says, “Look, some of you are thorny soil. You’ll come to faith, but your faith will be choked out by all the good things of this world. There’s only one soil that saves and the thorny soil is not it.

#### **Soil #4: Good**

Fourth soil is the good soil. Luke 8:11-15:

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God...[verse 15] But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.”



So Jesus is talking to his disciples, explaining the story that he told to the large group around him, and he said, “Some of these people in this large crowd are good soil. They are going to hear the gospel message, they are going to come faith in the news that I, Jesus,” he’s saying to his disciples, “am the saviour whose come to deliver them. I’m the one who, through my life and through my death and through my resurrection and through my return, is going to make all things new and save people for myself. There are people out there,” Jesus says to his disciples, “that will hear that message, that will believe that message, and will retain it.” It’s this active ongoing process of reminding ourselves of this news. It’s going to be something that actually sticks in them and by persevering produce a crop. So it’s a persistent belief in the gospel and also a persistent living in light of the gospel. It’s a recognition, in other words, that Jesus is our saviour, but he’s also our Lord and he calls us, as our Lord, to live in particular ways. So the people who are on the good soil are the kind of people who say, “You’re my saviour and my Lord. You get to call the shots and I’m going to live the way that you call me to live. I’m not going to be perfect in it, only Jesus is perfect, but you’re calling the shots. So whatever it looks like to walk in your ways, I’m going to do.” So perseverance, in other words, is --there’s a book that I haven’t read, but it has a great title called: *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*. Right. That’s what it looks like to be good soil. There’s a dedication over the long-haul to say that, “Every day I’m going to wake up and I’m not only going to remind myself of the good news of who Jesus is, but I’m going to live in light of that good news and let him be the Lord who calls the shots in my life. I’m going to be the kind of person who is continually running to actually win the prize at the end of the race.” Persevering in our faith is marked by living as a disciple of Jesus and not just being a part of a large crowd hearing his words.

One of our pastors - Pastor Ezra - will often quote James 1:22 when he’s praying and he’ll say something like this: he’ll say, “Lord, would you help us be doers of your word and not hearers only.” Right. That’s the prayer of a Christian. Not just that we’d be the kind of people who hear what the Bible has to say, but that we would be the kind of people who have an inclination, a desire, a posture of saying, “Lord, would you help me do what you’re telling me to do. Not so that you’ll save me, but because you already have, would you enable me by your spirit to be a doer of your word and not a hearer only. I want to live as a disciple of Jesus, as a student of Jesus. My identity now is not just that I go to church on Sundays but I mostly pursue the good things of the world, my identity is as a student of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and I want to follow him every day of my life.” That’s what it looks like to be good soil.

I think we need to take a minute, right? It’s January and it’s time to reevaluate some things, right? Because I think for many of us (myself included) that the primary way that we evaluate whether or not we’re good soil is on the basis of a private, personal, gut feeling about how we’re doing. Like, “I feel like I’m doing pretty good.” One of the measurables we have is, “How am I doing in my Bible reading plan and how am I doing in my quiet time,” right? All the blogs come out in January and are like, “Here’s the way to actually nail your quiet time: do it more and do it better.” There you go [laughter]. It’s basically what all the blogs wrote this last week. Now, hear me, I am all for taking the time to actually open up God’s word by ourselves and read what it has to say and read theology books and invest in understanding God’s word more - that’s amazing. But we also need to recognize that having our own copy of the Bible is a new part of the Christian scene. There have been Christian people for





hundreds and hundreds of years who didn't have people telling them to have their quiet time with the Bible at their house because there was no Bible at their house. How would those people be able to live a life as a student of Jesus if they didn't have their quiet time? See, the quiet time with the Bible is a gift from God, so yes, let's do it, but let's not be the kind of people who only judge how we're doing as a "soil" on the basis of our quiet time and how much we're killing it, because the reality is that some of us are already behind in our Bible reading plan and we're already thinking to ourselves, "Man, I obviously don't love the Lord enough." So often, we evaluate our spiritual life, our Christian life as a student of Jesus, by how much we're absorbing, but Jesus makes it really clear that what it looks like to be a believer, to be a disciple of Jesus, is to:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and to love your neighbour as yourself." (Luke 10:27)

We focus a lot on the private, personal, "How does my love for God look on the basis of my devotion time?" But Jesus says, "No, you need to love God and love your neighbour. It's a package deal." In other words, Christianity is far more of a community faith and much more of an others-focused way of living than we often give it credit for. We evaluate our spiritual life by how well we're doing in our own spiritual disciplines. The spiritual disciplines are good, but the call of being a disciple is not just to grow ourselves but to be a blessing to others. We're called to a life of community and of actually being involved in the lives of other people. To put it this way - in the Christian life, we should be thinking that we are more like a pipe than we are a sponge. Here's what I mean by that: a sponge works by --you fill it with water, right? And then you can do things with the sponge. Here's the problem: if you don't ever wring out the sponge, it gets stinky, right? No one likes a stinky sponge. Where as, pipes don't usually smell because if they are working properly, yes, there's all kinds of water that's flowing through it, but it's flowing through it to other places. The reality is that we, as believers, do need times when we invest in our own personal study so that we can be the kind of people who have God's word flowing through us, but we should be more like pipes than sponges. It's not just to have the word of God absorbing in us and us walking around saying, "I really love God because I'm killing my personal Bible plan read." No, we're the kind of people who say, "Look, I want to spend time in the word on my own, so that I can be a blessing to those around me because God's called me to love Him and to love my neighbour as myself. Jesus actually told his disciples that, "People will know that you are my disciples by how much you kill your quiet time. Like if you do that awesome, then they'll know." Actually, that was a sarcastic comment [laughter]. Jesus said, "People are going to know you are my disciples if you love one another."

The Christian life is necessarily a corporate, communal life. You can't be a Christian on your own and in reality, the people around you, need you as much as you need them. The Christian life is one that's meant to be communal. See, it's more than just our private devotions and quiet time. So look, if we're going to make a commitment - and I think we should - we should make commitments to spend more time in God's word. Yes and amen. More time in prayer. Yes and amen. But all I'm saying is let's make that less private and personal and more communal. Let's spend our time in the word with other people because they might help correct us in areas that we're wrong and we might help correct them in areas where they're wrong instead of only viewing my spiritual life of how am I doing praying by myself, how



am I doing by praying with the people around me? How am I not just filling up the sponge, but how am I being a pipe so that others can be actually blessed through me and I can be blessed through them. See, this is why we do things like community groups. We try to provide opportunities to make this happen for people, but you can do it in other ways too. If you're looking for a way to do this, we have Bible studies and community groups. Just grab one of the blue cards from any of our campuses and fill it out and we will try to get you in a group so that you can spend more time in God's word with God's people. Be the kind of person who would actually invest, not just in your own growth, but helping to learn more for the purposes of helping others so that people might know that you are a disciple of Jesus because of your love for another and not just about how many times you can instagram about how your week went with your Bible reading plan. The Christian life is a communal life and the people who are on the good soil produce a crop. There's a life of being a disciple of Jesus that's not just passive, but is active as being a disciple making disciple of Jesus that's involved in the process of the local church. See, the reason farmers sow seed is to reap a harvest, and the seed in this story represents the word of God, and if a plant produces a crop, then there's actually something to harvest. Jesus is talking to a large crowd of people and he tells his disciples that some of those people in that crowd are the good soil. They will believe the gospel, they'll continue to believe the gospel and they will live in light of the gospel, living as a disciple making disciple of Jesus. There's one soil that saves - it's the good soil. "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." Let me pray for us:

Father, your word is good and it's true because you're good and true and you've showed us that you are good, primarily through your son. That he came so that he could make a way for us to be saved. Lord, it's my prayer here this morning that for people who haven't yet put their trust in Christ, that this morning they would do that, and Lord, for the rest of us who have already done that, God, would you help us be the kind of people who don't wither away in the hard times and don't get choked out by the good parts of the world you've created, but who are focused on being a student of Jesus. You're our saviour and you're our Lord. Lord, would you work for our good, but mostly for your fame. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.