**How Will You Hear?**

**Mark 4:1-9, 13-20**

**Week Two**

Jesus was a master story teller. People of Jesus’ day were not really any different from people of today in the sense that they related to stories. Jesus took these stories using the familiar things of everyday life in the first century to capture the attention of His listeners. We should not be surprised that He often used the familiar imagery of farming, for example.

Hear the parable of the Sower and the Seed.

The word “parable” literally means “to throw beside.” Jesus, as He taught, threw a story alongside to make it memorable, so the teaching would have its greatest effect.

As Jesus taught on this particular day, he told a simple story about a sower, the seed, and the soil. Come and listen to Jesus’ story.

To get to the heart of this story, let me point you to three questions.

**How will I receive God’s Word?**

Some people might assume that this is a story about Gospel advance, and that might be partially true, but it is more a story for us as to how we will respond to God’s Word.

People receive the Word of God with one of four different hearts.

* Stony

When ground is hard, the seed just bounces. The seed never takes root. Some hearts are like that.

* Shallow

Other hearts are like the seeds that fell in a place where the ground did not allow the seed to grow deep.

* Suffocating

This is common soil for our day. The worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires of other things choke out the word. Things like entertainment, sports, work, all do that today.

* Surrendered

But then, there is good soil.

**How will I respond to God’s Word?**

The way that you receive determines the way that you will respond. There is only one way to really hear God’s Word—with a surrendered heart. Look at each phrase of verse 20—hear, welcome, and produce! Do you welcome God’s Word? “This is Your Word, O Lord.” Really, that should be the end of our debate.

James is helpful here.

**21**Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

**22**But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **23**Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face in a mirror. **24**For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. **25**But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:21-25)

**What will be the result of receiving God’s Word?**

The result will be determined by the response. Fruit is produced when we properly receive God’s Word.

**So what?**

* **Get into God’s Word.**
* **Guard your heart.**
* **Gauge by obedience.**

Am I willing to examine my heart?

Am I willing to examine my fruit?

Am I willing to surrender my life to Him?

Then Jesus said, “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen.”

**“**And those like seed sown on good ground hear the word, welcome it, and produce fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what was sown.”

There is only one way to hear—with a surrendered heart. How will you hear?