

What Condition is Your Heart?

Introduction

Welcome to this edition of *“My Thoughts with Dale Van De Bogart.”* I would like to welcome all of our faithful watchers and our new ones as well. As a reminder, all notes are in PDF, and located on our website, vdbm.org. Click on My Thoughts Video Series, scroll down on the page to choose the series, and download our notes.

In this week’s segment, *“What Condition is Your Heart?”* I will discuss the four kinds of hearts as they respond to God’s message in the *“Parable of the Sower.”* Open your Bible to the Gospel of Mark 4:3-9, 13-20.

What is the Heart?

There are two hearts, physical and spiritual. We know the physical heart pumps blood throughout the body. It also converts deoxygenated blood into oxygenated blood for our veins, arteries, and muscles. Some have used the heart to emphasize romantic, philosophical, or literary definitions.

Did you know the Bible mentions the heart about 1,000 times? The heart, in a biblical sense, is the spiritual part of us where our emotions and desires dwell, good or bad. Most of the time, when we are not conforming to God’s will, we are said to have a *“heart condition.”*

Examples of a *“heart condition”* would be Galatians 5:19-23. Here we see two different conditions, one is the *“Works of the Flesh”* in verses 19-21. We see a *“heart condition”* that is evil, treacherous, and deceitful. The second is the *“Fruit of the Spirit”* in verses 22-23. We see the good heart changed by the power of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Passage Text - Mark 4:3-9, 13-20

³ *Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.*

⁴ *And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and devoured it.*

⁵ *Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth.*

⁶ *But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.*

⁷ *And some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.*

⁸ But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased, and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

⁹ And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

¹³ And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

¹⁴ The sower sows the word.

¹⁵ And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

¹⁶ These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

¹⁷ and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

¹⁸ Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word,

¹⁹ and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

²⁰ But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

In this parable, Jesus talks about four types of heart conditions and how they respond to His message in four different ways. Remember, the "**seed**" is "**God's Word**," and the "**soil**" is our "**hearts**."

1. Hard Heart - Mark 4:4, 15

Farmers planted fields, in first-century Israel, on both sides of the road to use all the available land possible. They would scatter seeds by the handfuls until the entire field was planted. The goal was to get as much seed on the ground as possible to take root in the good soil, but some seeds fell into non-productive soil. The yield depends on the condition of the soil.

Let us compare this to our hearts. The human heart is like soil. It must be prepared to receive the seed before it can take root and produce a harvest. Remember, in this parable, the "**seed**" is "**God's Word**," and it is alive and able to produce spiritual fruit. The only way it can produce such fruit, it to be planted in our hearts and cultivated before the harvest will come.

Now, the **“hard heart,”** is the one that resists God’s Word. This makes it easy for the **“birds in the air”** or Satan to snatch it away from our hearts. The soil becomes hard when too many feet tread on it. Ones that open their hearts to all kinds of people and influences are in danger of developing a hard heart. Proverbs 4:23, **“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”** Hard hearts must be cultivated before they can receive the **“seed”** or **“God’s Word.”**

2. Shallow Heart - Mark 4:5-6, 16-17

Remember, the seed will always be the same, but the heart will differ due to the condition. So, some of the same seeds fell on rocky places. It does have some soil but can be a problem as the seed will spring up very quickly in the shallow soil.

The rocky soil refers to places in the soil that have a layer of rock, sometimes limestone that lays several inches below the surface. It will trap the moisture from rain, dew, or regular watering, so the plant will grow very quickly. Unfortunately, the sun takes out the moisture rapidly, and the plant withers or becomes scorched. Shallow soil means little root for the seed and little moisture to nourish the plant.

Again, let us equate this to our heart. This type of heart is like thin soil on a rock. There is no depth, so the plant will not last very long as there is no root. The **“shallow heart”** is the **“emotional hearer”** who joyfully accepts God’s Word, but never understands the price or the cost of becoming a genuine Christian. The heart experiences great enthusiasm for several days to weeks, but when persecution and life’s difficulties begin, their enthusiasm and joy disappear.

3. Crowded Heart - Mark 4:7, 18-19

Some farmers scatter seeds, and they fall into soil that is still full of thorns and briars. They would have intentionally spread those seeds into this area. Those seeds fell into the area where cultivation has not destroyed the thorns and briars. It will rob the seed of the nutrition, water, light, and space it needs to grow properly. When the thorns and briars grew up, the seed planted by the farmer was choked out, could not grow, and could not yield a crop for harvest.

What makes this heart so crowded? This heart is one that receives God’s Word but does not truly repent. They do not remove the **“weeds”** out of their heart. The **“weeds”** here are for example, worldly cares, desire for riches, and lust for things (1 John 2:16). These **“weeds”** are standing in the way of the **“good”** seeds or God’s Word taking root as they have no room to grow. This person desires to walk the **“broad road”** and the **“narrow road”** at the same time (Matthew 7:13-14), and it cannot be done.

4. Fruitful Heart - Mark 4:8, 20

The farmer’s main objective is to scatter and plant those seeds in plowed and readied or good soil. The seed now has the depth of soil, space, and moisture to grow and produce a crop for

harvest. This seed has an opportunity to multiply and yield a crop of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred-fold or times the amount of seed sown. A farmer would be happy to see their crop multiply so much. It would mean they would have more to plant and harvest in the coming year.

This is the heart of a true, genuine believer because a fruit or a changed life is the evidence of true salvation. Those previous hearts I talked about produced no fruit at all and belonged to people who truly never were born again.

Not all true believers are equally productive. From a genuine Christian's life, there will be some evidence of spiritual fruit produced.

Conclusion

Let me conclude this segment that this parable should encourage spiritual "**sowers**" meaning those who teach, preach, and lead others. The farmer sowed good seeds, but not all the seeds sprouted, and even the plants that grew had varying yields.

A different enemy influences each of the three fruitless hearts:

- Hard heart—the devil himself snatches the seed
- Shallow heart—the flesh counterfeits religious feelings
- Crowded heart—the things of the world smother the growth and prevent a harvest

These are the three great enemies of the Christian, the world, flesh, and Satan.

Do not be discouraged if you do not always see results as you faithfully teach the Word. Results cannot be forced to follow a mathematical formula, rather, it is a miracle of God's Holy Spirit as He uses you to lead others to Him. Productivity is in God's hands. Trust him and do your work, Amen!

I am Dale Van De Bogart and I fully agree on God's Word!

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