

Mark 4:1-20

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- [0 : 0 0] So you have your word open to Mark chapter 4 verses 1 through 20. If you're physically able and desire to do so would you join with me as we stand together and said, And as they grew up and increased they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.
- And he was saying, And as soon as he was alone his followers along with the twelve began asking him about the parables.
- And he was saying to them, To you it has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God. But those who are outside get everything in parables so that while seeing they may see and not perceive.
- And while hearing they may hear and not understand. Otherwise they might return and be forgiven. And he said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?
- The sower sows the word. And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown. And when they hear immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.
- [1 : 5 2] In a similar way these are the ones on whom the seed was sown on the rocky places. Who when they hear the word immediately receive it with joy. And they have no firm root in themselves but are only temporary then.
- When affliction or persecution arises because of the word immediately they fall away. And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns. These are the ones who have heard the word.
- But the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things, enter in and choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil.
- And they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit 30, 60 and 100 fold. Let's pray. Father we thank you for this day. We thank you for the opportunity we have to gather together as your people.
- To sing your praise. To lift our voices up. To build a fellowship and then to encourage one another. And we praise you for the freedoms we have to do that in this land of our nation.
- [2 : 5 6] Father we praise you that we can stand as your people and hear the word of God. See it with our own eyes. And as this passage admonishes us, help us to have ears to hear it.
- Lord not just so that we may gain information. But Lord that our lives may be transformed to become more Christ-like. We pray that you be glorified and honored in the way that you speak even now.
- Speak to your people. By the power and presence of your spirit. May you move among us. Beyond every distraction. Beyond every encumbrance.
- May we hear from you. We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. This very familiar parable which we have assuredly heard many, many times.

Is found in all three of the synoptic gospels. Though it is found in all three of them. Each Matthew, Mark and Luke add some differing elements to them.

[4 : 03] We'll highlight a few of those as we go through. To understand exactly what is going on. It is very becoming of us to read all three accounts when we study that. Though I will not do that this morning.

For while the variances may seem very small and minute. They add a little bit of clarity to what is going on. And they also add authenticity to the authorship.

Realizing that neither one of the synoptics was simply just copying the other. But rather they were the men of God. Moved by the spirit of God to pen the word of God. And so their variances in a very familiar text.

Highlights for us the authenticity of their own authorship. And their writing. Now that's good for us to understand. Because scripture does not contradict itself.

Rather it reaffirms itself. We are also in the midst of Christ's teaching. And we can gather from the synoptic gospels. That at this time in particular.

[5 : 03] We'll read a number of them found in Mark. We start with just after reading the first one. But Christ is teaching in parables. And if we were to put all of the synoptics together. That is Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

We would understand that at this particular teaching. He probably taught the crowd in ten parables. We're only looking at the first one this morning. Mark does not record all ten of them.

But we can see as it is used in context with the other passages found in scripture. That there were probably ten parables shared at this one moment. And so this one, as Jesus himself says.

If you do not understand this one, how will you understand any? Many Bible scholars will tell you. And I tend to agree. That this one is the key to understanding the remaining nine.

So unless we get this one right. We cannot hope to get the remaining nine right. Those nine include the lamp that is bought and not put on under a cover but put on a lampstand.

[6 : 11] It includes the worth of the kingdom of heaven. Not all these are found in the gospel of Mark. But that the kingdom of heaven is like a man who found a pearl of great price. And went away and sold all that he had so that he could have that pearl.

It is like the man who found the treasure hidden in the field. But it is like the mustard that grows up into a tree and the birds of the air come and find their nest. Teaching after teaching after teaching.

And yet Jesus tells us that if we do not understand this one. Then we will not understand any of them. So this morning our title for the message is having ears to hear the word.

This is the admonishment of Christ. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. I believe it was Warren Wearsby that said pastors take good courage.

Even Jesus had to tell his listeners, I mean to listen. To pay attention. To heed what I'm about to tell you. But what does it take to have ears to hear the word?

[7 : 17] We find in our passage, first of all, the problems that hinder us. Do not let your familiarity with the text lead to complacency and seeking to understand it.

That is, just because we've heard it does not always assume that we know it. This is the challenge for every pastor. This is really the challenge for every Bible student. This is the challenge for every believer that when you go to the word of God.

The word of God is so rich and deep. You don't read it one time and say, oh, I've been there and done that. I've read it Genesis to Revelations. I don't have to go back to it anymore. Friend, I don't know how many times, and I don't say this boastfully, that I've read it Genesis to Revelations.

But I do know that every time I open it up, I find something new. The old evangelist John Knox I shared with someone not too long ago used to read the entire scripture.

Genesis to Revelation every 30 days. Every 30 days, by candlelight. When he died, they found impressions beside his bed where his knees had worn the floor out where he would read it on his knees.

[8 : 26] Every 30 days. That's why I say if you can find the writings of John Knox, read them, my friend, because he wrote from the depths of scripture. Why would he read it so often?

Because each time you go back to it, it's living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. It pierces to the very depths of our being. We have ears to hear it, and we want to know it.

But there are hindrances for every one of us. There are things that keep us, and this is why we must go back to scripture repeatedly each and every time.

There are things that keep us from really hearing what it is that it tells us. In God's grace and in his mercy, the longer we walk with him, the more he shapes and conforms us, and the more we go back, oh, now I'm ready.

I remember as a non-believer, I was married to my bride, and we were gathered together, and she was much more righteous than I. And she said, we ought to read the Bible together.

[9 : 28] I said, okay, that sounds fine. And some of you know the account, we started reading the Bible with two chapters a night together very early in our marriage. And my voice was so monotone, I'd put her to sleep. This is why I knew the Lord would never call me to be a pastor.

Every night, she'd fall asleep. It's supposed to be, I read a chapter, she reads a chapter. I'd read the chapter, and inevitably, she was always asleep, so I'd read the second chapter, and I'd tell her what we read. But I didn't understand a word of it.

Why? Because for the first two years of our marriage, I was a non-believer. Made our way through Scripture, and we were reading and reading and reading, and I couldn't comprehend a thing. I had eyes, but I couldn't see.

I had ears, but I couldn't hear. And then I came to Christ, and all of a sudden, the passage began to leap off the page, and I began to see things. God called me into the ministry, and I thought I would preach.

And as I was preaching, I had that young fire of a pastor in me. I was 25 years old when I began to preach. This will mark, this December, will mark my 20th year in pastoral ministry.

[10 : 26] That's a mouse on the internet. I didn't think I would ever get to, but the 20th year in pastoral ministry coming this December. And so when I was very young in the ministry, I thought, well, I'll preach through the book of Revelations. I opened it up, and God said, no, you won't.

You're not ready. It was about six years before I could preach through the book of Revelations. Why? Because there was some shaping that needed to take place in my life. See, the word shapes and molds us, but there are problems that hinder us, and in the parable of the soils, we see these problems.

We won't read them all in their entirety, but let me caution you, my friends. Don't assume you are the good soil. That's an assumption I had to be careful with myself.

You say, well, I'm a believer in Jesus Christ. Don't assume you are the good soil. The first hindrance is easy.

It is the seed. Jesus uses a parable. It is something to come alongside of a truth, and often it uses something that was applicable or easily grasped by the average citizen of his day.

[11 : 36] That's why the scripture is so powerful. Listen, the Bible is not confusing by nature. It is confusing because it's spiritual. It is written and declared to the ordinary man in ordinary terms.

Just this past Wednesday, I had someone give me a copy of scripture. It's called the Y'all Bible. I like that. I said, I'm not going to preach from it on Sunday mornings, but it's called the Y'all Bible.

One of the earliest English translations in America, one of the earliest American translations was called the Plowman's Bible. The average farmer could read it, and it would be hard for any of us to decipher nowadays because it is very broken English.

It is even intentionally misspelled because they wrote words as they sounded. If you've ever read D.O. Moody's handwritten letters, you would know what I'm talking about. D.O. Moody couldn't spell worth a nickel, but he wrote it how it sounded.

He wasn't an educated man. But the Bible is common, and that's what the parables do. They come alongside. They give you something that is easily grasped. And the picture that Christ gives as he's on the sea here, and the people who are on the seashore, is about the sower going and sowing the word.

[12 : 42] And it speaks about the first hindrance, the seed that falls on the road or on the hard ground, the hard pack ground. But what does he say? He says, this is the seed that when it is sown, and immediately Satan comes and steals it away.

It was Spurgeon who said, we may delay in sowing the word, but Satan does not delay in stealing the word. The first hindrance that we find is that immediately Satan takes the word away.

Now, there are really, if we just want to stop and make an aside right here, there are at least three varying absolute truths that we can see from this parable.

And the first one is the universality of what is sown. The word is sown in each and every circumstance. It is the same word. It's the same seed that is used.

It is the same truth that is declared. But the first hindrance that we come upon is the reality that Satan steals it away. Friend, listen to me. Some people, when they hear the word of God or the word of God is shared with them, make no mistake about it.

[13 : 47] As soon as it is shared, Satan steals it away. It is a spiritual hindrance. This is one of the variations of the three texts that we find this parable in.

Because Luke refers to it as the devil. Matthew refers to him as the enemy. So he is the enemy. He is the devil and he is Satan himself. So we get very specific here in the Gospel of Mark because Mark uses his proper name.

He is the enemy of man's soul. But the first object is to know that there are some in which Satan takes it away. Surely you have encountered someone in sharing Christ and sharing the Gospel or trying to share your lives.

And you say, well, why is what I'm saying? It has no impact whatsoever upon their lives. It is because Satan is allowed to run powerfully in their lives and snatches away that which may be good.

That's the first hindrance. The second hindrance is the one that I believe plagues our land more than any other. And it is the seed that is sown on shallow soil.

[15 : 01] In our own county, we can acknowledge this. We are blessed with a good crop of rock in this county, right? And so we know what it looks like to have shallow soil. And it is talked about the seed that falls on the ground that looks good.

And it sprouts up immediately. Mark uses his favorite word here. And immediately it sprouts up. And it grows. And all of a sudden it is there. But there is no depth of soil. So it has no roots. And since it does not take root, the sun rises too.

Just as the plants rise, the sun rises. And it scorches it and it dies. And Jesus says, these are those who hear the word and receive it with joy. And immediately they grow up.

They say, oh yes. He says, but they are only temporary. And the moment trials or tribulations, the moment they need to persevere, they fall away.

Again, we go back to what Spurgeon said about this. Spurgeon said, the word quickly received is too often the word quickly neglected.

[16 : 04] There was a day and time, even in our own land, where men and women, boys and girls, were encouraged to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

And by declaring that, what they meant was that if you were seeking Christ, they would let the Spirit of God deal with your heart and bring conviction.

And they would let God draw you. Now, I'm not endorsing any of this. I just want to tell you what would happen historically. If you came to the altar, no one would come pray with you. If you said, oh, I need a Savior, they'd say, get into the word.

And you would wrestle. Some people would wrestle for months. Some would wrestle for years. And then they would refer to what they called the breakthrough, the day when they finally understood they were saved.

And they would say, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt I'm saved. George Whitefield came that way. George Whitefield wrestled and fasted and prayed and he did all the legalistic things and he did it for months.

[17 : 11] He fasted so much that they kicked him out of Oxford because he looked so sickly and he was intentionally failing his classes and he was trying to do everything to be righteous and to be right.

And then he would go home and he would fall upon his bed. Nobody would walk with him. No one would lead him anywhere. But he got into the word and then one day he said, wow, the word of God says I'm saved.

And it set him on fire and the fire spread throughout his own country and even into this country. See, there was a time when salvation was something that was worked out, that was sweated over, that was mourned over, that was cried over, that was dealt with in an almost antagonizing way.

And in order to help men out, we began to lead them on a quicker path. And we would ask them just to raise a hand or to repeat after us.

And then we started having to write books about how to keep those who we've won. I'm not endorsing, I'm just asking you to consider. But I will say this.

[18 : 22] Give me a saint who's wrestled with the Lord God on his or her knees and someone who's come to Christ because of what the word of God has declared to them over one who has come because someone on a podium told them to.

See, those problems come. Anyone at any time can convince you of anything. He's, oh no, I'm not easily convinced. Let the crowd be stirred enough.

Let the atmosphere be right enough. Let the emotions get raised high enough. But it's in the solitude with our own self where God is quietly drawing us.

Moody, after the Chicago fire, said, I will never delay again calling people to Christ. And he began his evangelistic campaigns. Now I think highly of Moody's evangelistic campaigns. But the one thing that I don't always agree with on Moody's theology is that I also believe in the sovereignty of God.

That is, that God will lead those to salvation whom he knows will be saved. Now he's called me to declare and he's called you to share and he's called us to be there to declare the truth.

[19 : 42] But friend, listen to me. We don't save anyone. Salvation is the work of the Lord. It is a mystery, Jesus himself says in John chapter 3.

Just like the wind blows where it willeth. And we don't know where the spirit moves. But don't try to persuade anyone who's not willing to put down roots to grow.

I think that's the greatest hindrance in our land. But the third hindrance, I think, is the greatest hindrance that I face. There are those whom the seed is sown among the thorns.

Notice the thorns are already there. And Jesus says, and it starts growing. But the thorns outgrow it. And he tells us this is the word that is sown.

And while the soil is good, the soil is also polluted because there's something else in the soil. And the soil is full of thorns and thistles and all kinds of varying diseases and weeds. And the seed grows.

[20 : 48] And it sprouts. And it says, but the thorns grow and they choke it out. And what it declares to us is here is what would have been a fruitful plant. But it is choked out, Luke says, so that it will not bear ripe fruit.

That gives the implication that fruit was already appearing, but it was choked out before it became ripe. Mark tells us so that it could not bear fruit or that it would not bear fruit.

It is the untended garden. The plant was healthy until the weeds began to choke it. And it tells us what that hindrance is. In all three synoptics, it tells us that it is the pleasures and the concerns and the distractions and the desires of this life.

The desires for wealth and varying things and the misguided ambition for fortune or the desires for the things of other things.

Again, one quote said, how can Christ find room in the end when the end is already occupied by so many others? That is the soil I'm most scared to find in my life.

[22 : 03] Just being transparent with you. That it is the one that finds desires and concerns for other things, that if I'm not careful, I will allow it to choke out. The fruit may be present, but it will never be mature.

That's the one that I'm cautious of. Look at the problems that hinder us. Number two. You say, I thought that was all of them. No, that was the first one.

Number two. Look at the promise that is made to us. That promise is found in the fourth soil. He says, but then there's the good soil.

There's the good soil that it says that when the seed is there, it does some amazing thing. It says the seed was sown on the ground, on the good soil, and they hear the word.

Friend, listen to me. The hindrance is not a lack of ability to hear. The physical ability to be able to hear is implied in all four.

[23 : 11] And the good soul hears the word and accepts it. It's not that they just heard it physically. Now, you know, you parents and grandparents know what I'm talking about.

I'm not asking, do you hear me? I'm asking, do you listen to me? There's a big difference between hearing and listening. You know. Christ says, these are the ones who not only hear the word, but they accept it.

And they accept it for all that it brings in their lives, for all of the calls and the concerns, for all the distresses and all the temptations and all the persecutions and all the trials. And they accept it and they say, yes, I want it.

It says, and bear fruit. 30, 60, and 100 fold. The second truth that we find from our text is not only there's the universality of the word that is sown.

I'm actually giving you like three sermons in one. This is good. The second thing is, is there's the astonishing reality that the majority of those who hear the word will not accept it. But the third one is, is that those who do will bear such supernatural fruit that it will overcome.

[24 : 25] Matthew reverses this order. He says, 100, 60, and 30. Mark tells us 30, 60, and 100. Luke tells us that they are just fruitful. We see the varying degrees of fruitfulness, but we see this reality that they are fruitful.

The word of God repeatedly tells us that the righteous bear fruit. Jesus says, I am the vine and you are the branches. He who abides in me, what does it say?

Will bear much fruit. It doesn't say may bear much fruit. He says will bear much fruit. He also says that the tree that will not bear fruit will be dug up.

The roots will be cut and be cast out. But those who bear fruit will be pruned so that they will bear more fruits. The fruitful vine is a picture of the nation of Israel. all throughout the Old Testament.

It is because of their unfruitfulness to do the things of righteousness and holiness that God removes them from the promised land. But here is the promise that is given to us.

[25 : 25] That those who hear the word and accept the word bear fruit. Now that word bear is not a past tense word. It is an active present tense. That means that they are continuing to bear fruit.

Fruit bearing is an ongoing process. So the promise is pretty simple. Those who can hear the word and accept the word will continuously be bearing fruit for the sake of the kingdom.

And I believe every one of us. We say, well, that's my desire. I want to be fruitful. I want to, because if you didn't, you wouldn't be here. You say, well, so-and-so made me come here.

Well, okay, well, then hear me the rest of it. We ought to desire to be fruitful. We ought to have this longing, not just to have born fruit, but to be bearing fruits. There are things in my garden right now that no matter how much my wife has worked on them, they have borne fruit.

We've gotten it off of them. We've eaten it. We've put some of it, and we've preserved it. Now those plants are about gone. I'm not just going to leave them hanging there, right? I'm not going to let them stay in the garden. They're about to get uprooted and taken out of the garden because they're taking up space and doing nothing.

[26 : 37] Everything around our place has a purpose, right? It has to serve a purpose. It has to do that. And you say, well, that's kind of hardcore. No, that's just kind of the way it's supposed to be. All these things are created for a purpose. And so we don't just have these plants because they're beautiful with all their yellowing leaves and going to hang out there.

No, we have the plants because they were bearing fruit, and now that we have the fruit, it's time to get rid of the plant. What we want to be is to be fruit bearers. Ongoing, continually bearing fruit, some hundred, some sixty, some thirty.

It doesn't mean we'll all bear the same. But the question is, well, how do we get there? So that leads us to the third and final thing. We see the problems that hinder us.

We see the promise that is made to us, and now we see the position we must hold. The position we must hold. And here, we really get to the weight of the whole thing.

Here is the most difficult portion of the passage. We've already dealt with the simple matters. We've already dealt with the things. Oh, yes, I can see that. But now let's kind of dig our feet into the ground and say we're ready to accept some hard truths, and we'll see them for what they are.

[27 : 43] Notice that it says, and again, the crowd was gathered to him. The crowd was around him. To such an extent, Matthew tells us that Jesus started out on the seashore, and the crowd got so large that so that he could speak to the entirety of the crowd, he got into a boat, and he pushed away from the shore, and he sat down in the boat, and he taught them from the boat, and there was this massive crowd around them.

And it says, and he began to speak in parables, and it tells us in the other gospels, and without parables, he did not speak to them. So we see it is emphatically declared that the only way Jesus would teach them from this point on is through parables.

Now there is a grand question. Why? Because up until this point, Jesus has spoken with clarity and certainty. He has told them that if I cast out Satan by a kingdom greater than Satan, then the kingdom of heaven is in your midst.

They have already said, the Pharisees and the religious scribes have already declared that Jesus cast out Satan by Beelzebul, who is the head of Satan, or the ruler of the kingdom.

They've already said that he has a demonic spirit. The Pharisees and religious leaders by this point are already plotting with the Herodians how they may do away with Christ.

[28 : 53] He has already declared that it is worthy of doing good on the Sabbath. But from this point on, he speaks to them through parables, and without parables, he does not speak to them. Why?

Though the crowd is around him, the multitude is before him, he veils the truth. We have to say that, because he does. He says, well, that's not fair.

Well, that's what leads us to consider, are we in the crowd? Are we still those after the crowd leaves? Because to the crowd, the truth is veiled.

But to his disciples and apostles near him, the truth is declared. The explanation was given to the minority, not the majority.

It was the few who were given the clear teaching of the parable, but it was the multitude that were given the truth veiled, and we say, why? Well, Jesus answers it for us.

[30 : 06] It says that after he taught this, as soon as he was alone, in verse 10, his followers, pay attention to that, now we have went from the crowd to the followers, his followers, along with the 12, began asking him about the parables.

So now we've left the crowd behind, now the followers and the 12 are asking him about the parables, and he was saying to them, to you, has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those who are outside, give everything in parables.

Why is he speaking to them in parables? He answers it. And this answer, by the way, is also quoted by Luke, and it's quoted by Matthew, and it is a direct quote from Isaiah chapter 6.

Now, any of you who know scripture, know Isaiah chapter 6, is a very important chapter in scripture, because in Isaiah chapter 6, that is the year of King Uzziah's death, that Isaiah found himself before the throne of thrones, and the king of kings, and he fell upon his face, and the royal robe of the king was all around him, and he said, woe is me, for I'm a man of unclean lips, and I live among the people of unclean lips.

It is the commissioning of Isaiah, in Isaiah chapter 6. And part of the commissioning of Isaiah, I hope that you're still with me, say with me, in Isaiah chapter 6, is not just, will you go do, he says, would you go do this, in this way.

- [31 : 23] God gave him very clear meaning. And in this way, is this. He wanted him to do it, for what Jesus says here. Verse 12. So that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they may return, and be forgiven.

Isaiah was sent, and commissioned by God, and he said, you will go before them, so that they will hear you, but not hear. They won't understand. They will see you, but they won't be able to perceive.

Therefore, my judgment will be righteous, when it falls upon them. Isaiah, I'm sending you, so that they cannot say, we did not have the opportunity to hear. I'm sending you, because you're going to be the opportunity, though they're not going to hear.

And Jesus says, he teaches the parable, now stay with me, you have to, I know I told you, we're digging our feet in. Jesus says, I speak in parables, so that while seeing, they may not be able to see, and hearing, they may not be able to hear, otherwise they may hear, and return to me.

You say, I thought Christ wanted everyone, to return to him, and find forgiveness. And you're exactly right. God does not delight, in the death of any. But look at what it says, in the gospel of Matthew. This is why you have to be there, right?

- [32 : 32] In Matthew chapter 13, this parallel passage, Jesus quotes this same quote, because he says, for their hardness of heart, has turned them away. So for those, whose hearts, were already hardened, by their actions, Jesus says, I have no compelling, to be clearer, any longer.

They had hardened their hearts, therefore, they had closed the door. But they were not, without excuse. He was veiling the truth, to the multitude.

Why? Because it all depends, on where you are positionally. But to you, it has been given, to know the mystery, of the kingdom of God.

Now I'm going to wrap it up, make it simple, a good application for you. Paul says the same thing. The kingdom, the mystery of the kingdom of God, has been revealed to us. Where is that found?

Friend, listen to me. You don't have ears, to hear the word, and eyes to see the word, as long as you're hanging out, in the crowd. Let's just say it, let's bring it down, to layman's terms. It's only, it's only, when you're, in relationship, with Jesus Christ, as your Lord and Savior, can you hear it.

- [33 : 52] We get the ears to hear, and the eyes to see, through Christ. Not through intellect, not through ability, not through scholasticism.

It is not because, we are well learned. It's not because, we are well versed. It's not because, we study harder. Most, quote unquote, Bible scholars, are non-believers.

There are great, Bible classes, and major universities, which are, most often, Bible criticisms. dissecting the book, as they would, any other historical writing.

And yet, there are a multitude, of passages, which they have wrong. Not intellectually, but spiritually. Why? Because we cannot, be in the crowd, and hear the word.

It is only, when we can be alone, with Christ, and ask him, will we hear the word.

[34 : 57] Do you want me to tell you, the rest of my story, as Paul Harvey would say? When I was 15, I thought I would read the Bible, because I knew I had a problem. I knew there were some problems, in my life, so on my own, at 15, I thought I would read the word, and I start trying to read the word, I still have that Bible, it's back there in my office, it's the first Bible, I used to carry it with me, later on in life, and I'd put it in my lunchbox, it's all stained, and falling apart, so I can't preach out of it, but I used to, lay in bed, and read that Bible, at the age of 15, I had no idea, what it was saying, I just knew that, if you want to be a good person, you read the Bible.

Read the Bible, off and on again, we get married when I'm 18, when I'm 18, I'm reading the Bible again, for another two years, and some of you say, man you married young, yes I was, it's okay, we'll keep going, so I was married at 18, I read the Bible again, I did not come to Christ, until a month, before I turned 21, so from 15, until 21, I read it, and had no idea, what I was reading, the very first passage, I read after coming to Christ, I hit my knees, in my bedroom, at 201 Canova Drive, called out, said Lord Jesus, I don't know what I'm doing, I need you to take control, my world is falling apart, nobody was there to lead me, the word of God, had been penetrating me, I couldn't understand, a thing of it, I just knew I needed a savior, because everything I read, it told me I was wrong, the very first passage, I read after that, was in the book of Proverbs, and the sleep of the righteous, will be sweet, that night, for the first time in two years, I slept all night long,

I understood it, I began carrying, that same Bible, that Bible I had been reading, for now six years, I began carrying, that same Bible, putting it in my lunchbox, friend if you were, to go back there right now, and open up that Bible, you would find, that not only are the pages, falling apart, because it was carried, alongside of an ice pack, in a lunchbox, but you would find markings, and writings all over it, my first sermons, were in that first Bible, my handwriting, is all over it, different color and ink, and I've marked it all up, and I began to see things, and understand things, those things all came about, after I came to Christ, you will not find, a single marking, in that Bible, before I came to Christ, because I was in the crowd, and had no idea, what he was saying, but the moment, I came to Christ, all of a sudden, my eyes could see, and my ears could hear, I don't take for granted, that I'm the good soil, but I know, that I can hear the word, and it's up to me, to accept it, and to begin to apply it, but the question is, where are you, because the position, you maintain, matters, let's pray,

Father, I thank you so much, I thank you for this day, I thank you for these people, what a grand opportunity, we have to be together, to see the word of God, and hear the word of God, and Lord Jesus, we pray that in you, that we would do just that, may we, have ears to hear, and hearts to accept, you tell us, in the gospel of Luke, Lord Jesus, that that good soil, was the soil, of a good, clean heart, but the acknowledgement, is Christ, who can make the heart good, but you, so if there's a heart here, that has not been made clean, may they know that, they need to clean heart first, for those of us, that have had that new heart, of flesh put in, may we come before you, and say Lord, we need our feet washed, because we've been walking, in this world too long, have your way, we ask it on Christ's name,

Amen, Amen.