



PRACTICES: STUFF CHRISTIANS DO TO GROW

SERMON 2: HOPE FOR HARDENED PATHS

Why would Jesus use a parable?

“The parable surprises, astonishes, shocks, provokes... it obliges one to reconsider things, to come to a new decision.” ~ Paul Ricoeur

What is the problem with the path?

“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it.” ~ Mark 4:3-4

“The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.” ~ Mark 4:14-15

Who are “path-like” people?

How can we prepare a path for planting?

“... break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.” ~ Hosea 10:12

“But I, when I am lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men to myself.”
~ John 12:32

Going Deeper

(For individuals or small groups to go deeper with the passage)

1. Read Mark 4:1-20.
2. What are some different ways to describe hearing? What kind of “hearing” is Jesus talking about in this parable?
3. How would you describe the problem of the path and the seed? Can you think of any examples from the Bible or your life that illustrate this?
4. What are some ways Satan seeks to steal the Word from you or others?
5. Putting aside thoughts of initial salvation, is the “path” a fitting description of your present spiritual life? Why or why not?
6. Spiritual Exercise: In prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to show you if an area of hardness has developed in your heart that is stopping you from experiencing God’s life-giving and transforming Word. If you become aware of an area of hardness, thank God for showing you this, confess the hardness to the Lord, and ask Him to help you break up that ground as you meditate on His grace and love for you, seeking to receive His Word in faith.