

**Rev. Thomas Emery**  
**“Fertile Ground” Matthew 13:1-9, 25-30**  
**Salem Presbyterian Church**  
**Sunday, July 13, 2014**

Have you ever wondered, “Why don't most people who hear the gospel become a Christian? Why don't most people read the Bible, believe it, and have it change their lives? Why don't most people believe in Jesus?” Now thankfully Jesus told a parable to answer all of those questions. In fact, it is one of the most well-known parables in the entire Bible. It is known as the Parable of the Sower, but it could just as easily be called the parable of the soils of the heart.

### TEACHING POINTS

**Teaching Point One:** *The Stubborn Heart is the one who does not understand the Word of the Kingdom.* The evil one comes and snatches away even the little bit of seed that is sown in the heart.

**Teaching Point Two:** *Shallow Hearts hear the Word and receive it with joy, but because this group has no root, the Word only endures awhile.* When tribulation comes, the members of this group immediately stumble.

**Teaching Point Three:** *The Strangled Heart is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the faithfulness to the Word.*

**Teaching Point Four:** *Surrendered Hearts are the good, fertile ground who hears the Word and understands it.*

### THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

“But as for the seed sown on good soil, this is the person who hears the word and understands. He bears fruit, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown” (Matthew 13:23 NET).

### ACTION POINT

Four kinds of soil, says Jesus, are four kinds of people who have been culturally conditioned to resist the message of God's grace: two who have heard the message, but have never given themselves completely to it; those who have heard it, but have too many other concerns to focus on God, and finally those who hear the Word, apply it to their lives, and become fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Which kind are you? What changes do you need to make for the rest of your life? Certainly, we need to read God's Holy Word and pray over it. Further, we need to be open to God's surprises and new insights that He has in store for us as we grow and stretch beyond our present level of understanding.