

HELEN SANDERS

3-17-2023

THE PREPARED SOIL

If you have ever planted a garden, then you know to have successful crops you must prepare the soil before you plant the seed. You can't plant seed in ground that is hard or fallow. Fallow ground means ground that has been tilled but left idle for a while. It may become hard, and the hard ground must be broken up and tilled for the seed to grow.

In Mark chapter 4 Jesus taught many parables, and one was about someone planting seed. He compares four different soils that had seed planted in them. They were the wayside; stony; thorny; and good ground.

His message wasn't just about the ground we plant a garden in. His message was referring to a person's heart, the place God's seed is planted within. Most of the people that Jesus taught were either farmers or fishermen. They understood about planting seed.

The wayside would be like planting along a road. There would be no way for the seed to grow because the ground would not receive any seed. The birds found the seed on top of the ground and ate the seed. Jesus explained to his disciples that the birds represented Satan. He steals the seed immediately when it is planted carelessly into a heart. The seed, which is the word of God, is stolen before it has a chance to grow.

The stony ground would be like hardened untilled ground. Because it had become hardened, it would not receive any seed. It has no root system and will be like a person that gets offended at the least problems, persecution or affliction. Because there is no root they don't know the word well enough to keep it in their heart. The seed dies.

The thorny ground are those that are more concerned with worldly things. They are not interested in the deep things of God. They are concerned with the world's riches and things that keep them in bondage instead of God. Because of this they are unfruitful in their walk with God.

The good ground is ground that has been tilled and prepared. As it says in Hosea 10: 12, ***"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."*** The fallow, idle ground of their heart has been tilled and plowed, ready to receive the seed. It will bring forth fruit. Some thirtyfold (30 times what was sown) some sixty, (sixty times what was sown) and some an hundred (a hundred times what was sown). This is the ground that produces fruit, and what Jesus is looking for. He wants you to prepare your heart to receive His Word, and then bring forth fruit. How do we prepare the ground of our heart? We repent of sin, we daily seek God through reading His Word, and we act on it. This kind of heart is soft. It is able to receive from God. It doesn't get easily offended, and treats the seed planted with care. It is fruitful.