

**Introduction:** A Prayer → A Predicament → A Process

**The Question:** How does spiritual growth happen? Is it God's job or mine?

**The Answer:** Mark 4:1-20

**I. The Context**

- Jesus is rejected as King and Messiah by Israel's religious leaders – Mark 3:6
- Jesus invites all who are willing to do God's will to receive Him as their King and enter His family with a new life and power in His Kingdom – Mark 3:35

**II. The Public Ministry – 4:1-9**

- The Setting and Method – Mark 4:1-2
- The Content – Mark 4:3-8
- The Warning – Mark 4:9

**III. The Private Ministry – 4:10-20**

- The Question and Privilege– Mark 4:10-11
- The Purpose of Parables – Mark 4:12
  - To Reveal
  - To Conceal
- The Priority of this Parable – Mark 4:13

**The Parable Explained – Mark 4:4-20**

<b>Soils</b>	<b>Kinds</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Hindrance</b>	<b>Results</b>
Roadside	Hard (No Faith)	Devoured (No Growth)	<u>Birds</u> Devil/Satan	Devoured
Stony	Shallow (Faith Minus Convictions)	Immediately sprang up – No deepness; Germinates – No growth	<u>Sun</u> Not much earth Tribulation- Persecution Because of the Word	Scorched Withered
Thorny	Crowded (Faith Minus Perspective)	Choked Received/ Stumbled Some growth No fruit	<u>Thorns</u> Cares of the world; Decline of rule; Lust for other things	Yielded No fruit
Good	Receptive (Luke 8:15 – Faith)	Growing up, Increasing Germinated – Growth Varied fruitage	<u>None</u> Hears and perceives	Bear Fruit 30/60/100 Different degrees

## How Spiritual Growth Occurs

- I. **The Prerequisite** – Growing Christ-followers **believe** Jesus' claim to the rightful King of everything, everyone, everywhere, forever – Mark 3:31-35
  
- II. **The Priority** – Growing Christ-followers **understand** "The Miraculous Seed" (God's Word) is the source of life, power, and fruitfulness in Jesus' Kingdom
  - It created everything – Hebrews 11:3
  - It births spiritual life – 1 Peter 1:22-25
  - It gives power – 2 Peter 1:3-4
  - It makes holy – John 17:17
  - It provides protection – Psalm 119:9-11
  - It provides direction and correction – 2 Timothy 3:16
  - It comforts – Psalm 119:92
  - It exposes our motives – Hebrews 4:12
  - It defeats Satan – Ephesians 6:16-17
  - It judges us eternally – Matthew 7:21
  
- III. **The Problem** – Growing Christians **recognize** there are at least 3 enemies seeking to prevent God's Word from taking root and transforming our lives:
  - The enemy
  - Our circumstances
  - Our crowded, deceived, lustful hearts
  
- IV. **The Promise** – The Miraculous Seed produces supernatural spiritual growth 100% of the time when planted in good soil.

**Summary** - Our response to the **WORD** will determine our **relationship** with the Lord!

## **Application / Discussion Questions:**

1. Share some of your frustrations with the past in regard to spiritual growth.
2. How did this passage and teaching help simplify the issue of spiritual growth? What questions or issues still remain unanswered and/or confusing to you?
3. What aspect of this message was most helpful to you? Why?
4. Share an area of your life where you have received God's word and seen the kind of change and growth that Jesus (and you) desire.
5. Share an area of your life that God's truth has fallen on "shallow" or "thorny" soil and needs to be addressed. Who might help you? What do you sense Christ wants you to do? When will you trust/obey Him in this issue?

## **Assignment**

Look up and meditate on the passages given under "The Priority" of God's Word on page 3 of these Message Notes.