

Prepared Soil

Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23 That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. ² And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.

³ And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴ and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. ⁶ But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. ⁸ And others fell on the good soil and *yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear.”

“Sowing” is a different kind of ministry than most of us have engaged in: It is BROAD-CASTING the seed.

Mark 4:26-29 ²⁶ And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; ²⁷ and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. ²⁸ The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

When a man wants to grow a plant, he plants a seed. When he wants to raise a crop, he sows in abundance!

This is why the kingdom is growing so slowly in the west. We focus primarily on relational single-seed-sowing.

Mark 16:15 ¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

1 Timothy 4:13 ¹³ Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching.

“Go and sow the seed liberally in all creation- in all kinds of places and among all kinds of people- and see what God will bring forth from it!”

The soil must be prepared before it can be sown. It must be enriched and then broken open to receive the seed.

The seed only grows and bears fruit in the PREPARED places.

Hebrews 11:3 ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Even when we are the sowers, Jesus goes before us and opens the soil to receive the Word. The Word cannot bear fruit where Jesus has not prepared the heart- and then God causes the growth!

¹⁸ “Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. ²⁰ The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²³ And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

The understanding must be prepared! As Jesus opens minds, we raise each generation to know the Word of God.

The cross of Jesus AND the cross of the believer must both be preached! Salvation must never be allowed to degrade into a matter of convenience.

Eternal thinking must be cultivated within our society and the love of the world must be choked out! What does it profit a man to gain the whole world....?

Prepared soil receives the seed, the seed takes root and makes the plant, the plant bears fruit- and THEN the harvest comes!

May our lives- and the lives we touch- bear much fruit! Even 30, 60, and 100 times what was sown!

John 15:8 ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

Kids Ministry/9am service Update

4 weeks until we roll out a full 9am Kids Ministry. Want to keep you all updated on the progress each week until then. Each week, we will also be making a specific ASK of the church.

Vision: Why It Matters

The service itself is getting quite full, especially while kids are in. For perspective, attendance numbers are running about like this:

1st service

Main service: 75 people

Nursery and Pre-K: 4 kids

2nd Service

Main service 175 people

Kids Ministry: 65 kids

Here is the raw truth about where the church is and what we must do as a body. **We are asking the mature to make a sacrifice.** What do I mean by that? The facts of 2nd service:

- We are outgrowing the parking lot and the Kids ministry in second service.
- There is getting to be a bottleneck in the building itself at 11am
- Families with kids will continue to pull toward the second service based almost solely on the availability of Kids Ministry- this will perpetuate and increase the issue we are addressing
- Most visitors will visit the second service, and if there is not room for them, they will not likely stay
- The only way we can see right now to continue to grow in our current facility is to ask 11am members to move to first service, and the most reasonable accommodation we can make for them to be able to do that is to provide the same ministries in first service as we do in second, which we have wanted to do anyway.

1st service culture: Our heart is to give our 9am church family the same service experience and opportunities as the 11am church family.

Ethan Peace Testimony

The sacrifice we are asking the mature to make is 2 fold:

- We need 12 new classroom leaders to serve in Kids ministry at the 9am to help us get through this transitional period, and
- 11am families (especially) (target of about 50 people) are being asked to attend the 9am service until we are more balanced in attendance between the 2 services.
- 11am members are also being asked to serve in the 9am Kids ministry as classroom leaders.

This is a big change, but we can make it with grace if everyone will simple consider what part they can play in making it a reality.