

## **New Year/Semester Resolution**

Mark 4:1-20

### **Introduction:**

- Did anyone make a New Year's Resolution? What is it and are you still doing it?
- What do you like about a New Year or new semester? (*fresh start, set priorities, new schedule, etc*)

Jesus was the type of person who often challenged people to pause and think about life, goals, the future, etc. and people responded to Him in many different ways as this passage will reveal.

**Background Info:** A parable is a down to earth story used to teach a deeper spiritual truth

### **Read Mark 4:1-9**

- 1) List the 4 soil types and what happens to each.
- 2) Imagine you are in the crowd and you just heard Jesus tell this story. What do you think your reaction would be? (*nice story, wondering what He meant, etc.*) What do you think happened next?

### **Read Mark 4:10-20**

- 3) Who were the people who got to hear the explanation of the parable? What did they do to get an explanation?
- 4) Looking at their response to the parable and vs. 11 what do you think the secret of the Kingdom of God is? (*seeking God*)
- 5) Why do you think Jesus spoke in parables? (*give people an opportunity to seek Him and want to know Him more.*)
- 6) What happens to the people who are spiritually dull and show no further interest in His teachings?

7) What does the seed represent? What are some avenues that God's Word comes into your life?

8) *Explain the soil types and results, giving an example of each.* Which one do you resonate with the most? How are you coming into this new semester/year?

- Path – Satan snatches away the seed & there is no further interest
- Rocky – quick to respond, but have no depth of understanding so they fall away when hardship comes
- Thorns – hear the word, but the worries of the world and desires for other things push away faith.
- Good soil – hear, accept and respond by sharing it

9) What do you think “good soil” looks like in life? What results are promised to come from good soil?

10) Each time we hear God's Word we have another opportunity to be “good soil” in our hearts. What would it look like in your life this semester to have a “good soil” heart towards God and His Word?

- How might you prevent the worries or busyness of life choke out your desire to be good soil?
- What are the thorns that seek to choke out our spiritual life? From the sorority/fraternity, campus, family, school work?
- What role might this discussion group play in helping you receive God's Word and make it a priority in your life?

**Closing prayer:** In order to have good soil hearts we need to first ask God to help us.

- Pray that He would help us to receive Him and His Word into our lives.
- Pray that you would make a resolution this semester/year to not allow anything to choke out your desire to follow Jesus. Many things will come up, but pray that you will remain faithful to Him.

**Mark 4:1-20 (New International Version)**

**The Parable of the Sower**

1 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. 2 He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: 3 "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

9 Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that,

" they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,  
and ever hearing but never understanding;  
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"<sup>[a]</sup>

13 Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14 The farmer sows the word. 15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. 20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

**Footnotes:**

- a. [Mark 4:12](#) Isaiah 6:9,10