



## Scripture

*<sup>1</sup>Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. <sup>2</sup>And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: <sup>3</sup>“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup>Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. <sup>8</sup>And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”<sup>9</sup>And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

*<sup>10</sup>And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. <sup>11</sup>And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, <sup>12</sup>so that  
“they may indeed see but not perceive,  
and may indeed hear but not understand,  
lest they should turn and be forgiven.’ ”*

*<sup>13</sup>And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? <sup>14</sup>The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup>And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. <sup>16</sup>And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup>And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. <sup>18</sup>And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, <sup>19</sup>but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>20</sup>But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” (Mark 4:1-20 ESV)*

## Outline

Key Question: In what areas of my life are defilements and deception most common?

Big Idea: We must cultivate our heart to bear the fruit of God

Point 1. How do we cultivate hearts that are hard?

Point 2. How do we cultivate hearts that are shallow?

Point 3. How do we cultivate hearts that are distracted?

Point 4. How do we cultivate hearts to become more fruitful?

## Discussion Questions

**Icebreaker:** In what specific areas of your life do you struggle most with hardness, shallowness, or distractions?

### **Hard Hearts:**

- What are some things that can harden our hearts towards God and His Word? What contributed to that?
- How can we prevent our hearts from becoming hardened?

### **Shallow Hearts:**

- What are some examples of "shallow" responses to God's Word?
- How can we develop deeper roots in our faith?

### **Distracted Hearts:**

- What are the "thorns" in your life that choke out the Word and distract you from God?
- What practical steps can we take to minimize distractions and focus on God?

### **Fruitful Hearts:**

- What does it look like to have a heart that is truly bearing fruit for God?
- What steps can we take to actively cultivate our hearts so that they are good soil for God's Word?

## Your Prayer

Write out a three-sentence prayer based off this passage.