

## **SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:**

**February 22, 2026**

**MARK: The Life of a Disciple**

**Good Soil**

**Passage:** Mark 4:1–20

**Big Idea:** Jesus teaches that true success in the Kingdom of God is not luck, talent, or circumstances—it is becoming people who receive His Word deeply and bear lasting fruit.

### **Opening (5 minutes)**

- When you hear the word *success*, what usually comes to mind?
- How does Jesus' definition of success differ from what our culture celebrates?

### **Listening to Jesus (Mark 4:1–9)**

Jesus gathers a large crowd and begins teaching in parables, calling people to truly **listen**.

#### **What are we meant to understand?**

1. Why do you think Jesus begins this teaching with the command, “**Listen!**”?
2. What does this setting reveal about Jesus' authority and identity?
3. Why might Jesus choose to teach about the Kingdom of God using a story about soil and seeds?
4. What stands out to you most about the four different soils?

#### **How do we help each other listen well?**

1. What distractions today make it hard for people to truly hear Jesus?
2. How can a small group or church community help each other slow down and listen to God's Word?
3. In what ways does gathering together help us understand Scripture better?

#### **Seeking Understanding (Mark 4:10–12)**

Jesus explains that some people hear but never truly understand, while others pursue deeper insight.

1. Why did the disciples ask Jesus to explain the parable?
2. What does this passage teach us about the importance of seeking understanding?
3. How does Isaiah's example show that people can hear God's Word but still resist it?
4. In verse 10, “so that” can be “purpose” or “result” – based on how Nick explained this section and what you read. How are we to read the purpose of Jesus's statement? How does that fit with Jesus actions in the very next section?
5. How can we help people move from being “outside” to understanding the Kingdom of God?
6. What would it look like this week to slow down and ask God for understanding?

#### **Examining the Soils (Mark 4:13–20)**

Jesus expands and explains the point of his teaching.

#### **Along the Path**

- What does it mean that the Word is heard but quickly taken away?
- How can distractions, expectations, or cultural pressures keep people from receiving Jesus?
- Where might God be inviting you to soften your heart and truly listen to Him?

### **Rocky Ground**

- Why do some people receive the Word with joy but fall away when difficulty comes?
- How can the church help people develop deeper roots in their faith?
- What practices help your faith endure when life becomes difficult?

### **Among Thorns**

- What does Jesus say can choke out spiritual growth?
- How can busyness, success, or competing priorities affect a church community?
- Are there pressures or desires in your life that may be crowding out God's Word?

### **Good Soil**

- What does Jesus say marks the people who are good soil?
- How does a community help cultivate lives that are fruitful and faithful?
- Which soil best represents your life right now?
- What might God be inviting you to change in your environment, rhythms, or relationships?
- How can humility, honesty, and endurance help us grow into good soil?

### **Group Reflection**

Take a moment to reflect personally:

- Where am I right now?
- Share one step you want to take toward becoming **good soil**.