

4 types of soil / soul

**Mark 4: 1-8**

# What we want to know is ...

- “What must I do to change?”

# God's response

- “Remember who you are ... then you will know what you must do”
- We easily forget who we really are
- And so we keep asking: what must I do to change?

# Who we really are

- Created by God in His image

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

(Gen. 1: 26-27)

# Who we really are

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

(Gen. 2:7, NIV)

... and the dust returns to the ground it came from,  
and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

(Ecclesiastes 12: 7, NIV)

# What happened at Paradise?

The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the Lord said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. (Gen. 7 : 5-8, NIV)

# Judgment and Redemption

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Rom. 3 : 21-24, NIV)

# We are created as a unit: body-soul

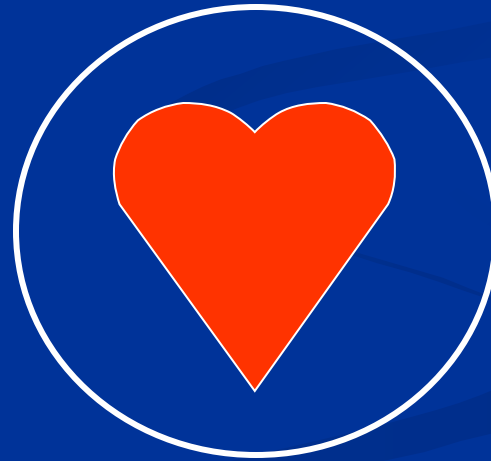
- we think, feel, make decisions, hope, create ...
- soul: “spirit” and “inner self”; also heart, mind
- we interact with physical world through the body
- body allows what’s inside to “come out”
- body: “flesh” and “outer self”





# Outer self and inner self

- Outer life is public and visible
- Inner life is private and invisible (thoughts, motives, hopes/dreams)



■ “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”  
(Mark 14: 38; cf. Matt. 26:41)

■ Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.  
(2 Cor. 4: 16b, NIV)

■ Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.  
(2 Cor. 4: 16b; ESV)

# Body & soul: which is more important?

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”  
(Matt. 10: 28)

- Soul (psuchē): the essence of life
- the most comprehensive term; “life”; “person”
- the conscious being who will spend eternity either in the loving presence of God or separated from God (in darkness and torment)

## 2 important questions Jesus asked

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life[b] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

**What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?**

(Mark 8: 34-37)

[b: The Greek word means either *life* or *soul*; also in verses 36 and 37 ]

## 2 important questions

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul (psuchē)? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul (psuchē)?  
(Mark 8: 36-37)

■ “Though Jesus’ statement is ultimately eschatological, there is a profound sense in which self-interest destroys life here and now. Each decision of life is making us into a certain kind of person, and the opportunity to relive life is not open to us. Life is lost (or gained) in living.” – Robert H. Mounce

# We are changing

- In which direction ?
- The direction God wants for His children ?
- “The most important thing about you is not the things that you achieve; it is the person that you become.”  
– Dallas Willard

# Parable of the 4 soils

- 1<sup>st</sup> parable recorded in Mark (found in all 3 synoptic gospels)
- Jesus fully interpreted this parable to his disciples
- farmer, seeds, soil – what is the variable?
- Farmer = Jesus
- Seed = the word; the gospel
- Note how generous the sower is with the seeds!

# Broadcast seed sowing







# Type 1 soul

“Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.” (Mk. 4: 3-4)

“The farmer sows the word. 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.” (Mk. 4: 14-15)



# The hardened soul

- Seeds fell on the path
- stepped on by feet, hooves, and even wheels
- hard and dry; seeds don't have any chance
- “very busy traffic”; always “on the go”
- “There may be no gross sin, but there is no interest in God whatsoever. Life is crowded with other things.” - R. Kent Hughes
- What can change the hardened soil?

## Type 2 soul

“Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.” (Mk. 4: 5-6)

“Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 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.” (Mk. 4: 16-17)

# The shallow soul

- shallow emotional response to Jesus Christ
- genuine faith is not only a matter of emotion, but also involves the mind and the will
- thin layer of soil with solid rock underneath
- What makes someone a deep person?
- “A soul especially has depth when it is connected to God.” - John Ortberg

## Type 3 soul

“Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.” (Mk. 4: 3-4)

“Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 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.” (Mk. 4: 18-19)

# The cluttered soul

- a person who knows God and is busy with all kinds of other things
- What is choking the plants here?
- “If the devil can’t make you sin, he will make you busy, because either way your soul will shrivel.”
- “Buying things we don’t need to impress people we don’t like with money we don’t have.”

# The cluttered soul

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (Matt. 6: 24)



## Type 4 soul

“Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

(Mk. 4: 8)

“Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

(Mk. 4: 20)

# The fruitful soul

- not a “hardened” soul
- not “shallow”; does not shrivel up under adversity
- not choked or pulled in all directions by competing desires
- God’s Word has taken root deeply in one’s heart
- different degrees of fruitfulness – don’t compare with others please

# How's your soul this morning?

Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear,  
let them hear.” (Mk. 4: 9)

# Continue to reflect on this parable

- “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?” (Mk 4: 13)

