



Why I Don't Understand

MAIN THING

SCRIPTURE

Luke 8:4-15, Mathew 13:15, James 1:23-24, 1 Peter 5:7, and 1 John 2:5-6

ICEBREAKER

From the past or present, who do you consider your hero? Why?

OPENING THOUGHT

Parables always relate to truth. It's no different with the Parable of the Sower. Jesus used parables because people were slow to understand Scripture. They needed illustrations (stories) to make them understand. From this point in Jesus' ministry, when He spoke in parables, He explained them only to His disciples. But those who had continually rejected His message were left in their spiritual blindness to wonder about His meaning. He clearly distinguished between those who had been given "ears to hear" and those who persisted in unbelief. In other words, those outside the kingdom could not discern the meaning and truth found in the parables.

The same is true today of believers who have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, who guides us into all truth. He has opened our eyes to the light of truth and our ears to the words of eternal life. The sermon illustrated "Why I don't understand" God's Word. Those outside the kingdom have hardened their hearts against God, whereas we, as believers, prepare our hearts or "soil" to receive and understand His Word. Surrendering to God through faith, being receptive to His Word, and constantly seeking His will are necessary acts to prepare our soil for understanding, obeying, and living a fruitful and righteous life according to His plan for our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the one thing that you heard this past Sunday that stuck out to you? Why did it resonate with you like it did?
2. In relation to Matthew 13:15, what are the most prevalent factors today that have caused "Men's hearts to become calloused" and inhibited them from hearing, understanding, and obeying God's Word?
3. Have you ever acted in a way just days, hours, or even minutes after hearing a sermon or reading Scripture that was the opposite of what you just learned? How did you react and respond during those times when you heard the message but did not listen?
4. What are three ways to prepare your heart for hearing God's Word?

LIFE APPLICATION

In the book of Philippians, Paul was imprisoned in Rome, waiting out a potential death sentence for his ministry. While in prison, he says one of the most quoted passages in the Bible. He says in Philippians 1:21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." His pronouncement of faith is one we should all strive to live every day. When we become faithful hearers of God's Word and understand the truth and direction that it gives us, we grow spiritually and receive blessings in many aspects of our lives.

The parable of the Sower is more relevant today than it has ever been. We have become enamored with ourselves, obsessed with materialism, and addicted to perceived acceptance on social media. Remember that the good soil is developed through abandoning self and surrendering to Christ. As we seek his will, our cares upon him, the distractions

and temptations of the world will fall away. Pray for yourself and others to become strong in faith and gain a deeper discernment, for God wants to tell you through his Word.

CHALLENGE

What does it mean to say, "To live is Christ" for us today? Take time to pray for a clearer understanding of God's plan for you to live as Christ did. Take time each day this week to ask God for direction on how you can obey and bless others through what God is teaching you in his Word.