

(continued from the front)

Good ground – The faithful hearer receives the word and bears fruit. The quantity of fruit depends on talent, effort, action, and the Holy Spirit.

There could be another type of ground within the church: **depleted soil**. Google AI suggests several causes of soil degradation:

Plowing – Turning over soil to prepare for planting removes protective vegetation, leaving it vulnerable to erosion. Likewise, a Christian may remove safeguards that protect against spiritual erosion. Bible study and prayer help prevent unfaithfulness.

Stagnation – Growing the same crop repeatedly depletes specific nutrients and reduces microbial diversity. Similarly, a Christian must engage in varied works to grow spiritually, including study, teaching, and service. A pew-warmer is not cultivating healthy spiritual soil.

Deforestation – Removing trees destroys soil structure and accelerates erosion by removing roots. In the same way, neglecting Bible classes and worship removes essential structure from a Christian’s spiritual life.

Over-use of Fertilizers – Excessive reliance on synthetic inputs harms soil nutrients and beneficial microorganisms. Likewise, anything that undermines spiritual growth will degrade fruitfulness.

Romans 13:11–12: “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”

Let us examine ourselves to see if our soil is healthy or depleted. If it is depleted, there is still time to enrich it and become fruitful again.

Phil Degelia



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Parable of the Sower: Another Possible Type of Soil

Mark 4:1–20 and Luke 8:4–15

Before mechanized farming, seed was sown by a farmer’s hand, cast in a wide, arching motion. It was imprecise—some areas received too much seed, some too little, and some fell on unproductive ground. Jesus’ parable of the sower describes four types of soil representing human hearts:

Wayside – The word (gospel) is sown, but because of hardened hearts, Satan takes the seed away.

Stony ground – This hearer receives the message with joy but does not commit to the actions of a true believer. There is no lasting growth. When worldly cares, troubles, or tribulation arise, the hearer stumbles.

Thorny ground – Mark refers to “desires for other things” and Luke to “pleasures of life” as reasons this hearer is unfruitful. Both terms can indicate sinful or even innocent pursuits that crowd one’s life, leaving no room for faithfulness.

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