

# life groups

NLC Life Group Through the Bible Study

Week of May 7, 2017

Sermon: PATH—Hearing From God



NEW LIFE  
CHURCH

# Life Group Schedule

**15 MIN** Eat, Meet & Greet

**15 MIN** Ice Breaker Game:

**Childhood Summers:** Since we are nearing the end of a school year, let's reminisce for a second. When school was letting out when you were a kid, what were you excited to spend all summer doing (e.g. trips, friends, TV shows, activities, etc.)?

## **OPENING PRAYER**

**45–60 MIN** Hearing from God

- The sermon from this weekend's "Path" series discusses how our faith can grow when we hear from God.
- **Romans 10:17** Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- But how do we begin to hear the word of God?

HEARING GOD IS DIRECTLY RELATED  
TO THE CONDITION OF OUR  
HEARTS.

**IN TODAY'S CULTURE, WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO QUICKLY PLANT INDIVIDUAL SEEDS. BACK IN THE JESUS' DAY, THEY THREW THEM OUT IN BULK—THEY SCATTERED THEM. JESUS TAUGHT THIS ANALOGY OF THE HEART WITH PLANTING SEEDS:**

**MARK 4:2-9 HE TAUGHT THEM MANY THINGS BY PARABLES, AND IN HIS TEACHING SAID:** "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. 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. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times." Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

# FOUR THINGS I MUST DO TO HEAR GOD BETTER

## 1. I MUST SOFTEN MY HEART.

- Q1.** When the seed is scattered the first time, why was the seed not successfully planted on the path? What is a real life example of this?

The footpath was a walking trail between two sections of fertile ground. This ground was a high-traffic area by farmers and livestock—compacted so much that it likened to pavement.

Sometimes, our hearts can feel so walked on, so used, so abused that they become compact and no longer fertile enough to receive from God. Scripture is full of people whose hearts were too hardened to hear God. Just like in the times of Moses when the Israelites were enslaved under Pharaoh.

**EXODUS 8:19** BUT PHARAOH'S HEART WAS HARD AND HE WOULD NOT LISTEN, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID.

Jesus explains in verse 15, *"The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away."*

There is not a person alive who will be treated correctly 100% of their life. It is what we do with that pain that matters. We can take it to Jesus for Him to heal us and teach us truth about those moments so the "soil of our heart can be tilled" enough to receive from Him again.

## 2. I MUST NOT HAVE SHALLOW FAITH.

- Q2.** Why were the seeds not successfully planted in the shallow, rocky soil? Can you think of a way this happens in our hearts?

Jesus explains to us what type of heart soil this is later on in the chapter.

**Mark 4:16-17** The seed on the rocky soil represents those

who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

We learn here that "receive it with joy" is Jesus' way of telling us this type of soil is when a faith is based off of emotions and what feels good. It sprouts quickly, but doesn't last long and it doesn't take deep root. That shallowness can be a result of lack of investment.

**Luke 9:23-25** Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed?"

**Q3.** Q3. What does Jesus say in the way to make a shallow, emotional root go deeper?

We don't want our faith to be swept away by any storm that comes so we NEED to make the root go deeper.

### **3. I MUST NOT ALLOW ANYTHING TO CHOKE OUT GOD'S WORD IN ME.**

The farmer in Jesus' parable was a professional—so he did not throw seeds into a thorny section of the field full of weeds on purpose. He probably already came through and removed all the weeds he could find. Weeds have a mind of their own and can still pop up later.

**Mark 4:18-19** The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.

We can do our best to rid ourselves of worries or temptations in our lives, but they can pop up at any time! The enemy uses worries and temptations that are CURRENTLY in our lives to choke out God's current word for us. God wants to speak truth about you or your situation RIGHT NOW.

**Q4.** Q4. What worry or temptation is on your mind RIGHT NOW that could keep you from accepting God's truth?

#### **4. I MUST BE STRONG AND BEAR FRUIT.**

When we read this scripture, we might think, “If there is so much bad soil around, why even bother scattering seed? Why not change the method or something?” The answer is this: When seed lands on GOOD soil it produces in multiples of 30X, 60X, and 100X. All of the trouble is worth it for the soil that is good.

**Jesus is saying that when someone has** “good soil” in their heart, they will produce a good crop by helping others truly “hear” God. Those with good soil will produce a good fruit for eternity.

**Hebrews 6:10-11** For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do. Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true.

- Q5.** Q5. Based on what we’ve read, what do you think you could do to make your heart better soil to hear and receive God’s Word in your life in a way that yields fruit?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**