



Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups

Parable of the Sower

Preached by Andrew Arndt

April 19, 2026

Summary

Have someone in your group read the following summary aloud.

Pastor Andrew preached on the Parable of the Sower from Mark 4, emphasizing that parables are stories Jesus tells that initially seem pleasant but later challenge us. The parable describes four types of soil that represent different heart conditions: the path (where Satan immediately snatches the Word), rocky places (shallow faith that withers under persecution), thorny soil (where worldly worries and desires choke out the Word), and good soil (which produces abundant fruit). Pastor Andrew emphasized that anyone who thinks they are good soil probably isn't, while those worried about being bad soil are demonstrating the humility that characterizes good soil.

The key message is that repentance is not a one-time event but a way of life that produces hearts that are receptive to God's word. Through spiritual disciplines like scripture reading, prayer, and fasting, along with active participation in church community, we position ourselves for God to work in

our lives as the gardener of our souls, continually breaking up hard ground and removing obstacles to spiritual growth.

Key Passages

- Mark 4:3-9
- Mark 4:14-20
- Psalm 51:10
- Romans 12:1

Opening Prayer

Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own
Heavenly Father, we come before You this morning with open hearts, ready to receive what You have for us. We acknowledge that we are here not by our own will, but because You have drawn us to Yourself. Lord, we ask that You would soften any hard places in our hearts and make us receptive to Your word. Holy Spirit, come and speak to each person in this group in the way they need to hear from You today. Help us to be honest about the condition of our hearts and open to the transformation You want to bring. We pray this in Jesus' name, **Amen**.

Getting Going

Allow time for each member to answer the following questions before moving on.

What's one hobby or activity that you've tried to get into but found more challenging than you initially expected?

Discussion Questions

Answer as many of these questions as time and interest allow.

1. Pastor Andrew mentioned that parables 'steal past the watchful dragons of the heart.' What do you think he meant by this, and can you think of a time when a story impacted you more than direct advice?
2. Looking at the four types of soil, which one do you most relate to in your current season of life, and why?
3. The pastor said that 'anyone who thinks they're good soil probably isn't, while anyone worried about being bad soil actually demonstrates good soil.' How does this challenge our typical way of thinking about spiritual maturity?
4. What are some modern examples of 'thorns' that might choke out spiritual growth in our lives today? How can we identify when good things become distractions from God?

5. The sermon emphasized that repentance is 'not a one-off event, but a way of life.' How does this change your understanding of what it means to follow Jesus?
6. Pastor Andrew mentioned that being part of the church community exposes areas where we're not yet who we need to be. How have you experienced this in your own life?
7. What role do spiritual disciplines (scripture reading, prayer, fasting) play in preparing our hearts to receive God's word? Which of these do you find most challenging?
8. The pastor used the analogy of gardening - that soil needs constant attention and cultivation. What practical steps can we take to 'work the soil' of our spiritual lives?

Making It Personal

Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.

This week, choose one spiritual discipline (scripture reading, prayer, or fasting) to practice daily, even if just for 10-15 minutes. As you engage in this discipline, pray the prayer from the sermon: 'Spirit of the living God, be the gardener of my soul.' Pay attention to areas where God might be revealing hard ground, shallow roots, or thorns in your heart, and ask Him to do transforming work in those areas.

Key Takeaways

Commit to memory one point from the message before dismissing.

- Parables are designed to make us uncomfortable and reveal areas of our hearts that need God's attention
- The condition of our hearts determines how we receive God's word - we can be like the path, rocky ground, thorny soil, or good soil
- True spiritual maturity is marked by humility and awareness of our need for God's mercy, not by thinking we've 'arrived'
- Repentance is not a one-time event but a lifestyle of continually turning to God and allowing Him to transform us
- Spiritual disciplines and church community are essential tools God uses to cultivate good soil in our hearts

Closing Prayer

Have someone from your group close your time in prayer, using the words below or your own.

Lord Jesus, thank You for this time together and for Your word that challenges and transforms us. We confess that we are sinners in need of Your mercy and grace. We ask You to be the gardener of our souls this week - break up any hard ground in our hearts, remove the rocks that prevent deep

roots, and pull up the thorns that choke out Your word in our lives. Help us to embrace repentance as a way of life and to position ourselves through spiritual disciplines and community where You can do Your transforming work. May we be good soil that produces fruit for Your kingdom. In Your precious name we pray, **Amen.**