

## Landscaped with His Word

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Married Couples Retreat: few spots left. Sept.16-18th. *Sheraton SD Resort & Marina*.
- B. Slide3a Apparant Project: Jewelry 4 sale in the info booth from Ladies Tues night.  
*Apparant Project is a project in Haiti that is a work initiative designed to enable parents provide for their children, to Help the prevention of child relinquishment & abandonment*  
*Many children in orphanages have parents. Slide3b*

### II. Intro:

- A. Slide4,5 Title: *Landscaped with His Word*
  1. James 1:21b (msg) In simple humility, let our gardener, God, **landscape you with the Word**, making a salvation-garden of your life.
  2. Let's not think of the ever popular *drought tolerant Xeriscape* (Zi-ra-scape) because of our water situation. **Let's picture lush *Garden-of-Eden-Scape***.
- B. 3rd major section of Mt. 8 parables.
- C. Western Texts calls it the *Parable of the Sower*. Eastern, *Parable of the Seed*.  
**But** its actually the *Parable of the Soils* (4 diff soils. 4 diff results)
- D. What **soil type** currently represents your response to God & His Word?
- E. What can you do for your heart to become the kind of **soil** Jesus is looking for?

### III. Slide6a PARABLE OF THE SOILS (1-9)

- A. THE SETTING (1,2)
- B. Jesus leaves the house He was in, in Capernaum, & walks down the block to lake Galilee.
  1. **Crowds were at epic proportions** (& *superficial followers* multiplied).
  2. So they place him in a small boat, & push him out a little ways. **The Galilean shoreline became His parish & the boat His pulpit.**
- C. Slide6b PARABLE OF THE SOILS (3-9)
- D. Sowing seed in bible times:
  1. The farmer carried a **large bag of seed** on his donkey. **Then** he would fill **his leather bag** that he would carry under his arm.

2. \* Unlike many countries today where the soil is prepared **before** the planting takes place, the seed would be scattered widely & **then** plowed in.
  - a) This is **not** the parable of the Careless Gardener. (*person just throwing seed everywhere haphazardly*) **No**, it's intentionally throwing the seed all over, **then** tilling.
3. A **footpath** often times cut across his field which the public would use. As the farmer would scatter his seed some would always land on this.
  - a) The **birds** would be quick to score a free meal. Often times large flocks would often *follow* the farmer. [*Like the seagulls if you've ever been Deep Sea fishing*]
4. **Rocks** were under the soil & couldn't be seen, **thus** no depth of earth.
5. Many **thorn bushes** were present. The native farmer would use these in the summer for outdoor fires for cooking meals.
  - a) So, he wouldn't have gotten rid of all of these weed/bushes.
6. **So**, this is **not** **wastefulness** or **inefficiency** on behalf of the sower, **but** it is an illustration of **the grace of God**.
  - a) **God's message**, **God's seed** is for all, **but** not everyone will **receive** it.
  - b) **Remember**, It is not the **sower** or the **seed** that is the problem...**but** the **soil**.

#### IV. Slide7a **A PARABLES PURPOSE (10-17)**

- A. Because of the **superficial followers** & **antagonists**...he *hides* the meaning.
  1. They can not get it with **only their own understanding**.
- B. **SPECIAL PARABLE** Mk4:13 *Do you not understand this parable? How then will u understand all the parables?*
  1. This parable holds the key to all others.
- C. **Slide7b IN GENERAL (3)**
- D. *Παραβολή* - **Para**/alongside; **ballA**/to throw or cast.
  1. So, a parable is **a story** that **comes alongside a teaching** to help us understand its meaning. *Parables are truth in picture form.*
- E. *The kingdom of God is like a seed...a wedding feast...a treasure*, etc.
  1. Each clue unveiling the once mysterious kingdom [*mystery=previously unknown, now revealed*]

- F. A parable gets the listener **deeply involved & compels them** to make a personal decision about God's truth & his/her life.
1. On the surface, a parable seems like harmless story, **but** in time it explodes w/ powerful meaning.
- G. **Slide7c** It acts as a mirror & a window:
1. **It's a mirror** that forces us to **look at ourselves**.
  2. **It's a window** through which we **see God & His truth**.
- H. Jesus explained **the kingdom**, **not by** giving a lecture on theology, **but by painting pictures** that captured the attention of the people & forced them to use their imaginations & think.
- I. Now He'll show them how to interpret a parable.

## V. **Slide8 SOILS EXPLAINED (18-23)**

- A. **3 DEFINITIONS** [*sower - word - soil*]
- B. **Slide9a The Sower** (18) - Here **Christ**, **but** any believer who shares the Word of God w/ others.
1. **Sow Plentifully**: 2 Cor.9:6 **Whoever sows generously will also reap generously**
  2. **Sow Passionately**: Ps.126:5 **Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy.**
  3. **Sow Patiently**: Gal.6:9 **Let us not become weary** in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
- C. **Slide9b The Word**=The Seed. **The gospel** is always a **fruitful seed** as to its power, **but not** as to its produce.
1. Like **seed** the **Word** of God is **alive &** is able to **produce** spiritual fruit.
  2. **But** the seed must be **planted & cultivated** before that harvest can come.
  3. **Seed** is fruitful...there is an **orchard** in an **apple**; there's a **forest** in an **acorn**.
- D. **Slide9c The Soil** = is the human heart. *Let's look at the 4 hearts described...*
- E. **Slide10 [1] SUPERFICIAL HEART** (19)
- F. The **Superficial Heart** has a *Lack of Understanding*.

1. It may not be some **gross sin** in their life but simply no interest in God whatsoever.
  2. Or they're **busy**...no time for **contemplation**.
  3. Or they might not be hostile to the gospel...just simply **disinterested**.
- G. Soil becomes hard when too many feet, hooves, wheels tread upon it.
1. *Don't recklessly open your heart to all kinds of people & influences.*
  2. Prov.4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.
- H. **Hard hearts** must be plowed up...*which can be pretty painful.*
1. Hosea 10:12 NLT **Plow up** the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you.
  2. Did the Lord have to plow up some things in your life to get your attention right before you got saved?
  3. Pray for your friends who have hard hearts; And for your own hearts when you go through calloused times.
- I. The **Superficial Heart** has a *Lack of Understanding*.
- J. Slide11 [2] **SHALLOW HEART** (20,21)
- K. The **Shallow Heart** has a *Lack of Depth*.
1. In much of the land there is a 2-3" thin covering of soil over a limestone bedrock.
  2. This is an emotional hearer - Easily swayed by *a tender appeal, a good sermon, or a sweet melody.*
  3. This person lives on *impulses, impressions, intuitions, instincts, & largely on their circumstances.*
  4. They joyfully accept God's Word, but do not really understand **the price** that must be paid to become *a genuine Christian*.
  5. They are like **the fish** that leaps out of the water with great energy,...but it would be foolish to conclude that he has left the water forever.

- a) In a moment the fish is swimming again as if it had never left the stream. The water is still his *home, sweet home*.
- b) They've only been *brushed* by Christianity.
6. You might see great enthusiasm for *days, weeks, months*; but when *the sun* of **persecution** or **difficulty** comes out, enthusiasm wanes & the joy disappears.
- a) A dazzling profession of faith, but then when something unexpected comes into their life they *abruptly fall away*.
- (1) I believe this is where so many of *the enemies of the faith* come from.
7. Man is pretty good at **counterfeiting religious feelings**.
- L. The **Shallow Heart** has a *Lack of Depth*.
- M. Slide12 [3] **SHARED HEART** (22)
- N. The **Shared Heart** has a *Lack of Weed Killer*.
1. They need a good dose of **Round Up**.
- O. The Lord desires our *whole* heart. Ps.119:2 **Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the *whole* heart.**
1. Not a divided heart like the girl to which a young man proposed to. He said, *"Darling, I want you to know that I love you more than anything else in the world. I want you to marry me. I'm not rich. I don't have a yacht or a Rolls Royce like Johnny Brown, but I do love you w/all my heart."* She thought for a minute & then replied, *"I love you w/all my heart, too, but tell me more about Johnny Brown."* (that's a shared heart)
- P. This heart receives the Word, but does not truly repent & remove *the Weeds* out of his or her heart.
1. See a gardener must not only **love flowers & fruit**, but also...**Hate Weeds**.
- Q. (22) **Unfruitful?** - **Fruitless Christians** is an *oxymoron*.
1. Lk.8:14 adds **...and bring no fruit to maturity**. (it never ripens)
2. **Maybe you've had this on a fruit tree at home?** [*little, stunted, sour fruit*]
3. The 1st 3 hearts produced **no fruit**.
- R. Slide13 3's A CROWD

1. Cares of this world – **worries** of this present age.
2. Deceitfulness of riches – deceptive lure of **wealth**.
3. The desire for other things<sup>(Mk4:19)</sup> **whatever** takes place of the Word in your life
  - a) Miscellaneous things can become the cause of *spiritual strangulation*.
4. The **lust for stuff** is a *stealthy* thing that enters your house a **guest**, **then** becomes a **host**, **& then** a **master**.

S. The **Shared Heart** has a *Lack of Weed Killer*.

T. **Slide14 3 FRUITLESS HEARTS**

U. *So far* the 3 fruitless hearts were influenced by 3 different enemies:

1. **Superficial Heart** – The devil himself snatches the seed.
2. **Shallow Heart** – The flesh counterfeits religious feelings.
3. **Shared Heart** – The things of **this world** smothers the growth/prevents a harvest.
  - a) 3 ugly enemies we still face today :(

V. **Slide15 [4] SUCCESSFUL HEART** (23)

W. The **Successful Heart** **doesn't Lack...Understanding, Depth, or Weed Killer**.

X. These are *true believers*...evidence a **changed life**; they evidence **fruit** in their lives.

1. Gal.5:22-24 **But the fruit of the Spirit is** (1st group of 3 are the **inner attitudes**, sourced in God) **love, joy, peace**; (2nd the **relational qualities**, expressed to others) **longsuffering, kindness, goodness**; (3rdly, **personal qualities**, that guides indiv. conduct) **faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**.

Y. Not all true believers are *equally* as productive.

1. Experts say, that **tenfold is an average harvest, thirtyfold is good, sixtyfold is excellent, one hundredfold is amazing**.
2. **But** every genuine Christian will evidence **some** fruit.

Z. The **Successful Heart** **doesn't Lack...Understanding, Depth, or Weed Killer**.

AA. Slide 16 Example in Jn.4 of the women at the well w/Jesus had a *progression* of **all 4 hearts**.

1. Superficial (vs.9) How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?
2. Shallow (15) Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.
3. Shared (20) Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.
4. Successful(29) Come see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?

BB. Slide 17a What *soil type* currently represents your response to God & His Word?

CC. What can you do for your heart to become the kind of *soil* Jesus is looking for?

DD. **Saints**, by grace, *liberally sow* the Word of God to **all** who you meet.

1. Let God take their Core Samples. He'll sort out the *alluvium/colluvium* of their hearts. You just keep **sowing**/sharing His precious Word.

EE. Slide 17b James 1:21b Msg *In simple humility, let our gardener, God, **landscape you with the Word**, making a **salvation-garden of your life**.*