



**Welcome to Worship**

**Sanford church of Christ**

# THE ILLUSTRATION

Not the Seed. Not the Sower. The Soil.



## BISHOP YVETTE FLUNDER

Presiding Bishop in the  
United Church of Christ (UCC)

She argued for a “Third Testament,”  
saying the Bible is “problematic”  
and contains passages used in  
harmful, dangerous ways.

# THE ISSUE IS NOT



THAT SCRIPTURE  
IS FLAWED.



THE ISSUE IS NOT  
THE SOWER.



THE ISSUE IS THE  
**SOIL.**

**THE CONDITION OF THE HEART  
DETERMINES THE OUTCOME OF THE WORD.**

**WHAT KIND OF SOIL**  
*Are You Cultivating?*

# The PARABLE of the SOWER

MATTHEW 13:1-9

He who has ears,  
let him hear.



## 1. THE PATH



The seed falls on the path,  
and the birds come  
and devour it.

Matthew 13:4

## 2. THE ROCKY GROUND



The seed falls on rocky ground,  
where it does not have much soil.  
It springs up quickly.

Matthew 13:5-6

## 3. THE THORNY GROUND



The seed falls among thorns,  
and the thorns grow up  
and choke it.

Matthew 13:7

## 4. THE GOOD SOIL



The seed falls on good soil  
and produces grain—  
some a hundredfold,  
some sixty, some thirty.

Matthew 13:8





# THE SEED

IS THE WORD OF GOD.

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*“The seed is  
the word of God.”*

LUKE 8:11

*“So shall My word be that  
goes forth from My mouth;  
It shall not return to Me void,  
But it shall accomplish what  
I please, And it shall prosper  
in the thing for which  
I sent it.”*

ISAIAH 55:11

# THE FOUR SOILS

The Parable of the Sower – Matthew 13:1-23

THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD. THE SOIL IS THE HEART.



## 1. THE PATH (HARD SOIL)

The seed falls on the path where it is trampled, and the birds come and eat it.

**Matthew 13:4, 19**

*They hear the word but do not understand, and the evil one comes and snatches it away.*



## 2. THE ROCKY GROUND (SHALLOW SOIL)

The seed falls on rocky ground where it does not have much soil. It springs up quickly because the soil is shallow.

**Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21**

*They receive the word with joy, but since they have no root, they fall away when trouble or persecution comes.*



## 3. THE THORNY GROUND (CROWDED SOIL)

The seed falls among thorns, which grow up and choke the plants.

**Matthew 13:7, 22**

*They hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke it, and it produces no fruit.*



## 4. THE GOOD SOIL (RECEPTIVE SOIL)

The seed falls on good soil and produces grain—some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

**Matthew 13:8, 23**

*They hear the word, understand it, and bear fruit.*



He who has ears, let him hear. Matthew 13:9

# WHAT KIND OF SOIL ARE YOU CULTIVATING?

THE SEED IS THE WORD. THE SOIL IS THE HEART.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



### 1. EXAMINE YOUR SOIL

- Be honest about the condition of your heart.
- Ask God to search and reveal.



### 2. BREAK UP HARD GROUND

- Repentance softens the heart.
- Surrender what has hardened you.



### 3. DEEPEN YOUR ROOTS

- Spend time in God's Word.
- Pray daily.
- Stay consistent.



### 4. REMOVE THE THORNS

- Cut out distractions.
- Lay down cares.
- Don't let the world choke the Word.



### 5. CULTIVATE FRUITFULNESS

- Obey God's Word.
- Serve others.
- Bear fruit that lasts.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart!"  
Psalm 139:23

"Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord."  
Hosea 10:12

"Let your roots grow down into him."  
Colossians 2:7

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us."  
Hebrews 12:1

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit."  
John 15:16



**GOOD SOIL DOESN'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT.  
IT HAPPENS BY CHOICE, SURRENDER, AND DAILY CULTIVATION.**



He who has ears,  
let him hear.  
Matthew 13:9

# WHAT KIND OF SOIL

ARE YOU  
*cultivating?*

THE SEED IS THE WORD.  
THE SOIL IS THE HEART.  
THE FRUIT IS YOUR LIFE.

MATTHEW 13:1-9

