Normally this is an easy parable to which we can relate.

It is a familiar story.

It is also one of the few parables Jesus explains.

*(Pause). (Walk)*

And so we’d like to think, that in this story, we are the *ones* with the hearts made up of rich soil.

We have been, after all, given the tools to *help* make us grow.

God sows abundantly, in our hearts, all of His goodness and mercy.

(Pause)

God plants in us strength, compassion and wisdom through Word and Sacrament.

We grow, in faith, through acts of altruism, the giving of our treasure, talent and time.

(Pause)

We are good stewards, and so through God’s nurturing we are fruitful.

*(Pause)*

The various types of *other* soil or lack thereof, fit the description of the *other* people in the world;

those who have encountered some kind of obstacle which has prevented their hearts from being open to hearing God’s Word.

Maybe they’ve been led down the wrong path, made bad choices.

Maybe they’ve ended up in a place of isolation or to a point they can no longer find solid ground upon which to stand…

*Something* has prevented the seed of God’s Word to take root in *their* hearts.

*(Pause)*

*Normally* this is how we hear the story of the sower and the seed.

 (Pause) (Move to step)

But today…can we find something else we can take away from this parable that perhaps we haven’t heard before?

(Pause)

 Yes - there is always something more God is telling us is in any scripture reading.

(Pause)

The more we read it, the more there is to glean from the Bible .

So…Looking at the different types of soil Jesus describes in this parable,

is it possible we fit in some of those other categories?

(Pause) (step down)

Have we ever been vulnerable?

Have we felt unsure of ourselves

or literally choked by daunting daily demands?

(Pause)

Have we been scorched by the need for material things,

surrounded by bad seed,

burned by hatred and greed,

or trampled so badly we can barely rise again?

*(Pause)*

At some point we all get **burned out**… stressed out…**or faked out**

 by the promises of today’s world.

(Back to pulpit)

(Pause)

We can become hardened by life.

… so what makes us think we can survive the wilderness we live in without God in it every single moment?

Our hearts cannot *always* survive the beating, the twists and turns,

the trials and traumas

that often turn our hearts into

cold, shallow and indifferent soil.

*(Pause)*

We cannot always find ways to open our hearts to the **Seed of God’s** love, grace and mercy,

 *on our own,*

because of the distractions constantly pulling us away from God.

(Pause)

We miss out on some of the most important things God wants to instill in us because we are **not** open.

Our hearts are **not** fully prepared.

Our growth is stunted or quickly abated by the elements of evil around us.

(Pause)

 We don’t blossom as God intended.

We stray, we hit bottom, we burn out, we suffocate.

*(Pause)*

Truthfully

(Pause)

we are in some, if not all, of these scenarios that Jesus’ talks about.

Our hearts are very similar to every other type of soil.

*(Pause)*

But do not fear.

Notice how the sower **scatters** his seed,

far and wide,

upon thorny soil,

dry soil,

and even the beaten path.

(Pause)

Doesn’t sound prudent or economical does it?

In fact, in Jesus’ time, his listeners would have questioned such extravagance and would have considered it wasteful.

*(Pause)*

But maybe, just maybe, the farmer doesn’t care about the amount of seed He is sowing

as much as He is concerned about the need for that seed…

(Pause)

and so he is generous with his application.

We can be thankful that God is **as** generous

…God is extravagant when scattering His seeds of love and compassion…

*(Pause)*

in spite of our condition.

In spite of the condition of our hearts, God richly bestows upon us more blessings that we could possibly ever fully appreciate.

Why?

*(Pause)*

Why would God pour out an abundance of riches knowing our hearts are not prepared to receive what God has to offer?

Why would God knowingly spread Goodness when we clearly are not ready…

 *because* we are worn out by the pressures of this world.

*(Pause)*

Why would God do that?

Because God is generous.

As David Lose puts it in his article “In The Meantime,”

“God does not hold back... God may want our hearts to be good soil but nevertheless hurls a ridiculous amount of seed even on dry, thorny, or beaten soil.”

**“God loves us just as we are**

**and so regards us as worthy of being showered with grace.”**

…God loves us…and wants us to grow into the people that God knows we can be.

*(Pause)*

Jeremiah 29:11-13 “For surely I know the plans I have for you,

says the Lord;

plans for your welfare, and not for harm,

to give you a future with hope.

*(Pause)*

Then when you **call** upon me and come and **pray** to me, I will hear you.

When you **search** for me, you will **find** me,

 if you **seek** me with all of your heart. ”

(Pause)

God has prepared our hearts to be fertile soil.

Notice that Isaiah equates …Gods Word …to rain and snow…

He says that neither the rain nor snow, like God’s Word, will not return **to God** without first accomplishing what God set out to do.

No matter the condition of our hearts, God will go to extremes until it is done. (Pause)

That is the Good News!

That is what we take away from today's gospel.

The Holy Spirit is always at work in us, …always, preparing us to be open,

to grow, and to bloom through God’s Word.

Paul reminds us that God has done what we could not do. God sent His only Son to die for us. We are only flesh and bones…

*(Pause)*

We are weak, but He is strong.

And since the same Spirit of God that rose Jesus from the grave ….also dwells *in* us – we too shall rise…

All we have to do it be open to the hearing of God’s Will and to pray that our hearts be good soil. Amen.