

The Good Heart

Mark 4.1-20

One day, in one verse -- Jesus describes everyone in the world that will go to Heaven.

And in five other verses He describes those who will not.

Have you ever reflected on His descriptions? Jesus said the words we are about to read as a warning for some (Watch out – you are Hell bound) and as a comfort for all the rest (Rejoice – you are Heaven bound).

So what does He say in this description? He said a heart that remains Trampled and Hardened Against God, Shallow With God, or Crowded Towards God will not enjoy the pleasures of God forever. Beware!

Jesus goes on to describe everyone on the planet that will be enjoying Heaven forever as being -- Good. Just as there are three types of lost Hell bound people types, there are also three different types of the Heaven bound. There are three levels, three categories, three degrees of fruitful lives. Basic, Better, and the BEST! Among the Good there are the 30 times over Good, the 60 times over Good, and the 100 times over Good.

Now if you just analyzed what I said and thought – “Nope, don’t have to worry. I have already DONE that.” Then think again. Salvation is not something you can DO. It is something that only God can do IN YOU and me. So here is the way Jesus explains all this.

One day Jesus compared life to a field, people to soil, the Gospel to seed, and eternal life to a crop of harvested righteousness.

Taken at face value, the message of the parable of the soils is clear: of four soils, only one is good. Only one produces fruit, and thus it alone is of any value to the farmer. This good soil pictures the believer. The weedy soil and the shallow soil are pretenders. The soil by the wayside is an absolute rejecter. Indeed, fruit is the ultimate test of true salvation. In the harvest, weedy soil is no better than the hard road or shallow ground. All are

worthless. Seed sown there is wasted, and the ground is fit for nothing except burning (cf. Heb. 6:8). It cannot picture salvation.¹

There are many ways to look at how God classifies us this morning. But we know the basis from all of His other parables. The harvest from the life is only because the heart was Good. No amount of effort can make a heart Good.

Goodness only comes from God.

Fruit always comes from a Good heart.

That fruit or harvest may be 30, 60, or 100 – but a good heart brings forth goodness for God's sake.

The most important question you will ever answer is the question, "Has God ever made you good?"

Not -- are you trying hard to be good.

Not -- have you done some good things – because bad people can always do good things if they want to. It is not what you do so much as what you are. Either we are good or evil as the center of our being. We were born not innocent but evil. We don't get polluted by our world as much as we pollute our world.

Are you good? Only God is good, so only God can make us good within.

Warren Wiersbe understands the issue clearly: It is important to note that none of these first three hearts [the soil by the wayside, the shallow soil, and the weedy soil] underwent salvation. The proof of salvation is not listening to the Word, or having a quick emotional response to the Word, or even cultivating the Word so that it grows in a life. The proof of salvation is *fruit*, for as Christ said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16)²

Please stand as we read the story Jesus told again. I will be reading the same account in Luke's record. Luke 8.5-18. Pray.

1. GOOD HEARTS NEVER STAY TRAMPLED. Mark 4:4 And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.
 - Luke 8:5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.

¹MacArthur, J., F. 1997, c1988. *The Gospel according to Jesus : What does Jesus mean when he says "follow me"*. Includes index. (Electronic ed.). Academic and Professional Books, Zondervan Pub. House: Grand Rapids, MI

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Meet Yourself in the Parables* (Wheaton: Victor, 1979), 27.

- Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.
 - Matthew 7:6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.
 - Hebrews 10:29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?
2. GOOD HEARTS NEVER THIRST. Mark 4:6a But when the sun was up **it was scorched**, and because it had no root it withered away. Remember the promises of Jesus to believers? There were seven nevers (complete set):
- John 4:14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him **will never thirst**. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."
 - John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me **shall never hunger**, and he who believes in Me **shall never thirst**.
 - John 8:51-52 Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he **shall never see death**." 52 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall **never taste death**.'
 - John 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they **shall never perish**; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.
 - John 11:26 And whoever lives and believes in Me **shall never die**. Do you believe this?"
3. GOOD HEARTS NEVER DIE. Mark 4:6-7 But when the sun was up **it was scorched**, and because it had no root it withered away. 7 And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up **and choked it**, and it yielded no crop.
- In Luke's account the word 'choke' is used right after the sower message to describe the pigs that drowned. God's Word can never be drowned from the life of a believer like demons drown pigs.
 - Luke 8:33 Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.
 - Why? Because the Word gives incorruptible, divine life that never dies because it is from God. Do you have that type of life? 1 Peter 1:23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

4. GOOD HEARTS ARE IMPLANTED. Mark 4:15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and **takes away the word** that was sown in their hearts.
 - James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness **the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls.
5. GOOD HEARTS HAVE REAL ROOTS THAT GO DEEP. Mark 4:17a and they **have no root in themselves**, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. **GOOD HEART IS: ROOTED SALVATION IS NOT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE BUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE!**
 - Matthew 15: 10-14 When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." 12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" 13 But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."
 - Ephesians 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
 - Colossians 2:7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.
6. GOOD HEARTS HAVE FAITH THAT LASTS. Mark 4:17b and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, **immediately they stumble**.
 - Luke 8:13 But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.
 - Luke 13:27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'
 - When God is present, salvation is real and the believer is KEPT from falling from the faith. Jude 24-25 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.
7. GOOD HEARTS BEAR REAL FRUIT THAT GOD WANTS. Mark 4:19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, **and it becomes unfruitful**.
 - Jude 12 These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without

- water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;
8. **GOOD HEARTS CONTINUE.** Mark 4:20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who **hear** the word, **accept** it, and **bear** fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."
 - These three words are present participles. They mark continuing action. Believers, in contrast to unbelievers, hear God's Word—they understand and obey it because God opens their mind and heart and transforms their lives. The true life from God is in the present tense. It is not only a past event. It is a past event that began and continues a present reality. Is God alive in you TODAY?
 9. **GOOD HEARTS ACCEPT GOD'S WORD.** Mark 4:20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, **accept it**, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."
 - Paradechontai means "to welcome for themselves". Have you welcomed, accepted, received – God's Word for yourself? If not He warns you of the doom ahead and invites you to come to Him for salvation. He loves you so much that He wants you to hear His voice and turn to Him.
 10. **GOOD HEARTS BEAR GOOD FRUIT.** Mark 4:20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, **and bear fruit**: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."
 - John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Remember how Jesus led people to faith in Him? Let me sketch them in Mark for you again:

1. **DOES GOD'S WILL:** Mark 3:35 For whoever **does the will of God** is My brother and My sister and mother."
2. **WELCOMES PERSONALLY:** Mark 4:20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."
3. **DESIRES, DENIES, TAKES, FOLLOWS, LOSES:** Mark 8:34-37 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "**Whoever desires** to come after Me, let him **deny himself**, and **take** up his cross, and **follow** Me. 35 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever **loses** his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?
4. **CUT OFF THE BAD:** Mark 9:43-47 If your hand causes you to sin, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two

hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— 44 where 'Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.' 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— 46 where 'Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.' 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, **pluck it out**. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be **cast into hell fire**—

5. SIMPLE TRUST: Mark 10:14-15 But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, **whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.**"
6. KNOW LOST AND OBEY CHRIST: Mark 10:17-22 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" 18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" 20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." 21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.
7. TRUST IN JESUS: Mark 10:24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who **trust in** riches to enter the kingdom of God!
8. ENTERS: Mark 12:34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You **are not far from the kingdom of God.**" But after that no one dared question Him.
9. ENDURES: Mark 13:13 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he **who endures to the end shall be saved.**