

5. The sermon used the metaphor of landmines to describe the forces that derail people's faith. How have you seen this at work in the lives of people you know and care about?

6. Describe the life of someone whose faith is fruitful.

7. What are some of the ways you seek to keep the landmines from derailing your faith and to be fruitful?

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

The Secrets of the Realm

"Getting in on the Secret" (Part 3)

Matthew 13:18-23

Matthew 13: ¹¹ He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them."

How to Get in on the Secret

1. Stand out from the crowds.
2. Pay attention and listen intently.
3. Go to the source for answers.

"Why parables? Because the stories test people. Would they write Jesus off as a mere storyteller? Or would they insist on learning what the parables meant?" (D.M. Doriani)

4. Open your heart.

Only a heart open to God will pay attention, listen intently, and insist on learning what the parable means. But an open heart isn't going to be

_____.

5. Live like the secrets of the realm matter...for the _____ haul.

A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society by Eugene Peterson

Understanding the elements of the parable:

- Seeds = the message of the _____ (13:19)
- Sower = _____ (13:37)
- Ground = People/ _____

Matthew 13: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.

Where is God leading you with your BLESS list this week?



Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23. List the major elements in the parable (e.g., seed) and what each one means, according to Jesus.
3. Note how the message of the gospel is presented to all four kinds of people and to what extent it is received. In your own words, what distinguishes the fourth kind of person from the others?
4. The Bible goes out of its way to assure us of our salvation. God wants us to follow him out of an enduring relationship, not out of fear of being rejected. Look up the following passages and be ready to share how they assure you of God's eternal love: John 1:12-13; 10:27-29; Romans 8:38-39; and Ephesians 1:13-14.

What distinguishes the first heart from the others in the parable is that the message doesn't take root in the heart, so there is no understanding. Understanding is crucial. Being in on the secret is crucial. But the second, third, and fourth kind of heart (or person) understands the message. They're all in on the secret, and it even takes root. But only the fourth _____ and produces a crop. Only the fourth person lives like the secrets of the realm matter...for the long haul.

One of the secrets of the kingdom is that not everyone who understands the message of Jesus and grows roots will persevere to the end... _____.

This parable is for insiders. It helps explain the complete rejection of the Messiah by the religious leaders. It explains why many who follow will fall away. And it helps followers of Jesus avoid the _____ and live like the secrets of the realm matter...for the long haul.

The Landmines

- Trouble and _____. (13:21)

Already/Not Yet. Jesus' kingdom has come, but not yet _____ as it will at his return.

The Relational/Emotional _____ Gospel.

- Worries of life and deceitfulness of _____. (13:22)

Matthew 6:25-33

1 Timothy 6:6-10

Christianity, for so many, is about living a moral life. Just be good. But Jesus says it's about his mission of proclaiming the kingdom and sharing the message of the gospel with people who are far from God. It's about standing and contending for justice and righteousness. It's about loving your neighbor and your enemy.