

Jesus continued: "Some of the seed fell along a pathway, and birds came and ate it up."

"Another part of the seed fell on rocky ground. It grew up quickly since there was just a thin layer of soil. But when the sun came out, the plants were scorched and withered because they didn't have any roots."

"Another portion fell among the thorns, which grew up and choked the plants so they didn't produce any fruit."

"And some fell on good soil, grew up and multiplied – yielding 30, 60 and a hundred times as much."

"Jesus then said: 'If you have ears, listen!'"

2

Jesus said: "Listen! A farmer started sowing his seed."

He was teaching by the sea when such a large crowd came to hear Him that He had to get into a boat. Jesus spoke from the boat, and the people listened from the shore.*

* This story is found in the Gospel of Mark 4:1-20.

1

Please open (unfold) and read inside.

7 If you really want to receive God's word and want to tell Him so, you can pray like this:

"Lord, I want to hear what You have to tell me. I open my ears and heart to receive Your message. I know I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I realize Jesus died on the cross in my place, to pay the price for my sin. So I repent and place my faith in You. Please forgive me, save me and guide me. In Jesus' name, amen."

The Bible promises:

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out" (Acts 3:19 NIV).

"Yet to all who received him, to those who **believed** in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12 NIV).



Read the Bible. Pray. Join a Christian church that teaches Jesus as the only way to God.

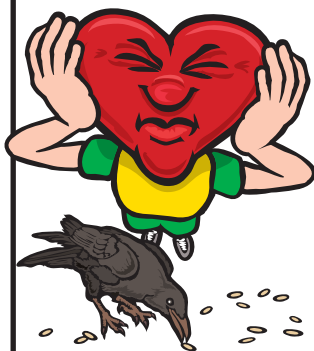
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GOT EARS? LISTEN UP!

What kind of listener are you?

3 The disciples and followers of Jesus asked Him what this story meant. Jesus explained: “The farmer sows the word of God. Some people are like the seed that falls on the pathway where the word is planted. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that had been planted in them.”



“Other people are like seed thrown on rocky terrain. They hear the word and immediately receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they don’t last very long. **When tough times and persecution come because of the word, they quickly give up.**”

4 “Still others are like seed planted among thorns. **They hear the word but when the worries of life, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire to have more come in they choke the word, and it ends up producing no fruit.**”



“But other people are like seeds that fall on good soil. They hear the word and accept it. **They produce a crop of 30, 60 or even a hundred times over!**”

5 Which one of the four kinds of listeners do you think you are most like?

1. Have you already allowed the “seed” of God’s word to enter and grow in the “soil” of your heart?
2. Did you make a decision to accept God’s word in the past, only to give up because of difficult circumstances?
3. Have you already abandoned those things which, like the thorns in the story, choke out God’s work in your life and hinder your growth?
4. What kind of “fruit” (good results) are you producing in your life?

If Jesus were to examine your life today, what type of listener would He say you are? What do you think He wants you to do and be from now on? Are you willing to hear and obey Him from here on out?



6 This story Jesus told speaks of the danger of rejecting God’s word. But if we accept that word, we will produce lots of “fruit” – that is, God will do wonderful things in and through our lives!

But how can we “accept the word”? The two demands Jesus always made were: **believe** (deposit your faith in Jesus alone, receiving Him as Savior and Lord of your life) and **repent** (admit and confess your sins to God, be willing to leave them and start following God’s will for your life).

When you accept God’s word in this way, it is important to **say** this to God and actually **invite Him** to be your Savior and Lord. You can do this with a simple prayer, like the one on the next page (page 7).



Continues on back (page 7) ►