PASTOR'S NOTES

The King and the Hearing Heart

Mark 4:1-20

Sometimes, parables actually concealed the truth from those who heard them. Jesus explained that those outside the kingdom would hear his words without understanding their spiritual meaning. Their hearts remained hardened in unbelief, while those who received the truth did so because of God's gracious work in their hearts. (See Isaiah 6)

At the same time, Jesus says to his followers, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God." Understanding the kingdom is a gift of God's grace.

Be alert: People can hear the word of God without truly receiving it. And when they continually refuse the truth, their hearts can become increasingly hardened toward it. The question is not simply whether people have heard God's word; it is how they respond to what we have heard.

The King reveals the conditions of the human heart. (Mark 4:13–19)

The seed represents God's word. The sower scatters that seed, and it falls upon different kinds of soil. Some falls on a hardened path, some on rocky ground, some among thorns, and some on good soil. The seed is the same, but the results are very different. The difference is the condition of the soil, which represents the human heart.

Remember the setting. Crowds have followed and gathered around Jesus. Some genuinely seek him, others seem only curious, and still others grow increasingly hostile toward him. They all hear the same words from Jesus, but they do not respond the same way. The same is true today.

A hard heart refuses the word.

The hard-hearted person hears the word, but it never penetrates. They don't receive the truth, repent, or respond in faith. And it's not just that people are unconvinced; Jesus tells us that Satan is involved. He immediately comes and takes away the word that has been sown.

But how does a person's heart become so hardened toward God's word? It could be:

- Persistent unbelief
- Spiritual apathy
- Self-righteousness.

Being around and familiar with God's word does not necessarily mean that the word has taken root in your heart. Hearing the word is not the same as believing it.

A shallow heart doesn't have lasting faith.

The shallow heart: People hear the word and immediately receive it with joy. They show enthusiasm, excitement, and what seems like genuine spiritual interest. But Jesus says they have no root in themselves. Their response is short-lived. When difficulties arise, they not only are discouraged; they fall away. They don't endure because the word never took root in their hearts.

Professions of faith that only include "raising a hand and repeating a prayer" are risky. We must understand that a profession of faith is not the same thing as possessing saving faith.

A crowded heart allows the world to choke out the word.

A crowded heart: the gospel is crowded out by life's concerns and desires.

Jesus identifies three things that choke the word.

1. The cares of the world.
2. The deceitfulness of riches.
3. The desires for other things.

Such a person may not openly reject God's word. He simply allows other things to become more important. The person may be willing to give Christ a place in his life, but not the first place, the Lord of his life. And gradually, the cares and attractions of the world choke out the word.

The King produces fruit through those who receive his word.

But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. (Mark 4:20 ESV)

Notice that hearing, accepting, and bearing fruit are ongoing characteristics of those who are genuinely saved. They don't merely hear the truth; they embrace it, and their lives demonstrate its transforming power. But what makes this soil different from the other three? The Spirit of God has moved upon them. (Mark 4:11).

Understanding the kingdom is a gift of God's grace. The same grace that opens our understanding also works in our hearts, so we receive his word and bear fruit. (Consider Lydia in Acts 16)

If left to ourselves, we remain spiritually dead in our sins. We cannot make ourselves spiritually alive. But God, in his mercy, opens blind eyes, gives life to the spiritually dead, and enables sinners to respond to the gospel with repentance and faith. And when God's word genuinely takes root in a person's heart, it produces fruit.

What kind of fruit? The fruit of a transformed life. A growing love for Christ, repentance from sin, obedience to God's word, love for others, and an increasing desire to live for God's glory, some producing thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

The question is not simply whether you've heard the gospel. Have you genuinely received it? Has Christ transformed your heart? Is there evidence of his gracious work in your life?

MeadowBrook CHURCH

Sunday, November 8, 2026 • Pastor Randy Gunter
mbchurch.com



CONNECT people to Christ and His church

family DEDICATION
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8



Collin Neal Baine
JULY 27, 2026
Joshua & Callie



Silas Elijah Bodeau
MAY 28, 2026
Loren & Rebekah



Maddox Taylor Boyd
JUNE 1, 2026
Dalton & Karah



Hayden Ann Fry
JULY 31, 2026
Baylon & Megan



Joshua Colt Gray
JULY 13, 2026
Tyler & Anna



Madison Reese Hayes
SEPTEMBER 9, 2026
Madison & Emily Ann



Bradford Phillip Keenum
MAY 11, 2026
Drew & Ashley



Atlas Benson Lett
JULY 16, 2026
Micah & Caley Jo



Troy Lee Lett
FEBRUARY 10, 2026
Coleman & Isabella



Blakely Michelle Pierce
MARCH 7, 2026
Adam & Kaitlin



Libby Scott Whorton
SEPTEMBER 13, 2026
Ben & Melissa

GROW them as disciples and equip them to

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK!

TODAY
8:00-8:20 am - Sunday Morning Prayer Time - W105
9:00 & 10:30 am - Worship - Worship Center
9:00 & 10:30 am - Life Group
9:00-11:30 am - MeadowBrook Kids - Kids' Theater
9:00-11:30 am - MeadowBrook Preschool
11:45 am - Thanksgiving Lunch - Gym

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9
Weekday Thanksgiving Lunch - Dining Hall
10:00 am - GriefShare - Conference Center
4:30 pm - Men's Bible Study - Conference Center

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10
Abundant Life Choir singing at McGuffey's
9:30 am - Tuesday Bible Study - Worship Center

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11
5:00 pm - Fellowship Meal - Gym
(Barbecue Baked Potato, Brunswick Stew, Salad Bowl, Dessert, or Salad with a Protein; Kids: Hamburgers, Chips, Cookies)
5:30 pm - Kids' Choir - Room 210
6:30 pm - Wednesday Men's Group & Women's Group, Preschool Ministry, KidStuf, Middle School Worship, High School Worship, Worship Ministry Rehearsal

life group
Life together for the Kingdom of God

Take the next step toward finding Christ-Centered community at MeadowBrook by visiting a Life Group.

For a listing of our classes, pick up a Life Group booklet at Guest Connections.

Welcome

If you are our **GUEST**, we'd like to **CONNECT** with you! Please fill out a **CONNECTION CARD** and stop by **GUEST CONNECTIONS** for a FREE gift!

2026 DAILY BIBLE READING

Nov 8 - Zechariah 3
Nov 9 - Zechariah 4
Nov 10 - Zechariah 5
Nov 11 - Zechariah 6:1-8
Nov 12 - Zechariah 6:9-15
Nov 13 - Zechariah 7
Nov 14 - Zechariah 8:1-8

SERVE through missions, ministry and worship

Thank You for Serving

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING LIFE GROUPS FOR SERVING AT OUR THANKSGIVING LUNCH TODAY:

KENT STEWART, MATT BROOKS, MARTIN/SIMMONS & OUR DEACONS

Women on Mission
Lottie Moon Cookie Bake
SUNDAY, NOV 15
2-4 PM • DINING HALL
RSVP on the App or mbchurch.com



HIGH SCHOOL WINTER RETREAT '26
DECEMBER 28-31
WINTERPLACE SKI RESORT
WEST VIRGINIA
REGISTER ON THE APP OR MBCHURCH.COM

Prayer Needs

Cancer/Treatments: Kyle Hughes, Robert Darnell, Aiden Beck, Larry Hill, Jamye Ingram, Tiki Kemp, Anna Rae Wilson, Bonnie Pierce, Scott Watford, Sharon Tillison, Paul Roberts, Carol Collins, Loucille Edge, Linda Dees

Ongoing Needs: Bebe Pruett, Chris Burnette, Lloyd & Diane Matthews, Susan Mize, Lola-Ruth Adams, Archie Wade, Landon Cunningham, Denise Dover, Peggy Brizendine, Kathy Thompson, Jimmy & Delores Thompson, Lavelle Ogletree, Danny Maddox, Robin Roberts, Ron Crawford, Phil Causey, Janet Maise, Rita Tipton, David Draper, Reese Robinson, Charlotte Taylor, Lindsey Rakestraw, Laura Hoge, Gary Alexander, Karen Ragan, Linda Roy, Joan Henry, Tim Davis, Gerry Grant, Dorothy Hand, Kenny Cahall, Larry Parker, Sandra & Wendell Qualls, Aiden Barron

- Don Garris - Encompass Rehab
- Randy Smith & family in the loss of his mother
- Kathryn Vice - recovering from gallbladder surgery
- Ruth Ann Stough, granddaughter of Patsy Snyder - treatments for Crohn's disease