

# Lent devotions

## READ:

Mark 4:1-20 (click to open link)

## REFLECT:

Jesus taught by telling stories. Stories captivate us. They lower our defenses. They intrigue us. They inspire us in ways that facts alone never could. Jesus told history's most famous stories: The Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Unmerciful Servant. His stories teach us about grace and generosity, forgiveness and faith, generosity and joy.

The first story Jesus tells in the Gospel of Mark is a story about a farmer. Not surprising since Jesus was usually talking to people familiar with an agrarian economy. Jesus says the farmer scattered the seed everywhere. On paths where the birds came and ate it. On rocky places where little soil existed and healthy roots couldn't be formed. In the weeds that surrounded and choked out any plants. And on good soil where the seed multiplied up to one hundred times.

I love to garden. Cucumbers are my favorite. I dig a little hill, place three seeds in the hill, and amazing stuff happens. Over the next few months, hundreds of cucumbers are created. Raw materials for peanut butter, bacon, and cucumber sandwiches. Dozens of jars of bread and butter pickles. It's wonderful stuff.

God is the farmer. The seed is God's Word. Jesus says not all seeds become cucumbers. It's all about the soil. Avoid the paths, the poor soil, and the weeds. Things like temptation, worries, peer pressure, and greed get in the way of faith formation. God sows the Word whenever, wherever, to whoever. Take good care of your soil and watch God do amazing things!

## RESPOND:

Ask yourself the question: What does good soil look like in my life? To respond to that question, consider the following questions:

- What environments have you found helpful in experiencing God?
- What activities have moved you closer to God?
- What people have pointed you toward God?

Also, what environments, behaviors, and people have produced poor soil in your life? What is you plan to eliminate these so that your soil can improve?