

Week 17  
January 11, 2009

## The Kingdom is Like a Seed

*Matthew 13:1-23*

1. Read Matthew 13:1-23.
2. Why are the parables so effective? Why does Jesus choose to teach this way?
3. Are you a fiction reader or a non-fiction reader? Why? When you read non-fiction, do you like biographies that tell a story or topical books that introduce information in other ways? Why?
4. Jesus tells kingdom stories using ordinary things like farming, father-son relationships, money and investments, cooking ingredients, jewelry, fishing, weddings, and household lamps ... If Jesus were preaching today, what kinds of stories would he tell?
5. Jesus says that the seed is like the message of the kingdom. The farmer is looking for a hospitable host for the seed. When you first heard the gospel, how ready was the soil of your heart? What was your "soil" like when you received Jesus, if you have?
6. Do you have experience to share of a time when you were like "the path," or "the rocky soil," or "the thorny ground?" Share stories.
7. Is anyone in one of those places now? What is it like? Are you hoping or strategizing toward change? How?
8. Jesus warns about worry and the deceitfulness of wealth. They are the "thorns" in this story. What is so deceitful about wealth? And why is worry such a problem?
9. Is worry the problem, or a symptom of something deeper? If it's something deeper going on, what is it?
10. Share a story about someone you love whose faith has not endured trouble or persecution and has withered away. With care not to gossip, describe what you've seen and how you feel and what you hope for. Then pray for each other's loved ones.

For the hardcore group

*A once-fervent Christian has been disappointed time and again by himself, others and (in his thinking) maybe even God. He's not sure he **wants** to clear out the rocks and weed out the thorns, and he might even be enjoying life on the path. He's not only grown weary of doing good, he's grown weary of **being** good. Now he's let you into his inner world. How do you come alongside, help, counsel and encourage this disillusioned, spiraling Christian?*