

## Preparing our Heart

*But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.—Matthew 13:23*

I am not much of a farmer. One year I diligently planted bean plants, watered and weeded and out of two rows of green beans, I got 4 beans. That was the beginning and ending of my attempt of growing what I eat. There are, however, couples in our church who plant marvelous gardens and bless others with the abundance of their hard work.

I have watched my friends spend days preparing the soil. They loosen the ground and add fertilizer so that the plants can get the nutrients they need. Unwanted debris like weeds, rocks, and branches are removed. My friends know that it takes a lot of preparation for the plants to get air, moisture, and sunshine.

In the Parable of the Sower, the seed was not able to grow because it fell on hard ground. If our hearts are hard we will not receive the word of God and it will not produce spiritual growth. In Matthew 13, some of the seed was choked out by the weeds. Things that may choke growth in the Christian life may be worldly ideas, old habits, and sinful desires. One obstacle to spiritual growth is that our life is full of the things of the world that choke out the things of God.

Like the farmer prepares the good ground so that healthy fruitful plants will grow, we need to make certain that our hearts are prepared to hear and understand the word of God. We need to make certain that our thoughts, attitudes, and things are not choking out the fruit that God is trying to produce in our lives.