

THE CHOICE THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

MAIN TAKEAWAY

The success or failure of our Christian life depends on how we hear God's Word. You decide how you listen to God's Word—this choice changes everything. You do not stumble into obedience to God; you have to choose it.

INTRODUCTION

If life is one long string of choices, what are some of the most important choices you've made? What small decisions have proven to be greater than you thought?

Why do some succeed and others fail as Christians? What happens if someone does not choose to grow spiritually (Deuteronomy 30:19)? What happens if someone wants to go forward as a Christian (2 Peter 1:3)?

UNDERSTANDING

READ LUKE 8:4-15

Pastor Greg explained, "The only way to tell if someone is really a Christian is through the test of time (1 John 2:19)." How does the Parable of the Sower illustrate this truth?

***Hardened Hearts* (v.12)—when the gospel is shared, Satan will aggressively oppose it. How does this shape your perspective on spiritual warfare?**

***Shallow Hearts* (v.13)—they never really get rooted and grounded in the faith. Why might these seeds shoot up quickly and wither just as fast?**

***Infested Hearts (v.14).* How have you seen the way that other pursuits can crowd out the things of God? How can excessive worry crowd out spiritual growth?**

***Fruitful Hearers (v.15)*—they hear God's Word, cling to it, and patiently produce a harvest. As seen in the good soil, what is the "golden key" to spiritual growth?**

Pastor Greg said, "Standing the test of time and finishing the spiritual life well is not a mystery—it's maintaining a close and vibrant relationship with Christ and continuing to grow." Why will those who have truly met God have a hunger for His Word?

APPLICATION

Which of these four soils represents the way you listen to the Word of God? Are you hardened, shallow, or distracted, or do you receive the Word, cling to it, and let it take root? How can you tell?

Pastor Greg shared the importance of the "RPGs" of the Christian life: Read the Bible daily, Pray, Go to church, and Share your faith. How have you experienced these as weapons against spiritual decline and apathy? Have any been neglected recently?

How does the Parable of the Sower encourage you in evangelism? What is your job, and what is the work of God?

Pastor Greg said, "The true commitment to Christ stands the test of time." How have you seen this in your life and in others? Share about the time that you made "the choice that changes everything."

PRAYER

Give thanks for the Word of God and spiritual fruit in your life (John 15:8). Pray for the sowing of the seed in good soil to take place through the evangelism of our church and in our personal lives.