

CONNECTING TO CROSSROADS

Crossroads is *a place where God and people meet*. Wherever you are at in your faith journey, we are glad that you have joined us. On Sundays we come together as a larger community to express our worship to God as we also listen to what he has to say to us through the Bible. During the week we gather in smaller groups at various times and places to care for one another as we share life and faith together. Between these times, we represent God among the people with whom we live in our homes, neighbourhoods, and workplaces.

We pray that you will experience the presence of God and the care of God's people as we spend time together. May the decisions you make today help you reflect more and more the character of God and the person God has made you to be. If you would like information on how to get more connected with our community, please talk to an usher

CONNECTING TO CHRIST

How does a person become a Christian?

- By *believing* that Jesus, God's son, died for your sins and rose again
- By *acknowledging* your need, *accepting* God's forgiveness, *turning* away from your sins, and *heading* in Christ's direction
- By *making* Jesus the Saviour and Lord of your life
- By *publicly* declaring your commitment to Christ

You can do this by praying like this:

*"Oh God, I acknowledge that I have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and am willing to turn away from them. I now receive Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord of my life. From this moment on I will live for him.
In Jesus' name, amen."*

And then tell someone about it. Tell a pastor or one or two close friends. It will help seal this act of faith in your mind and heart and help you know how to take some of the first steps of faith after.



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WELCOME TO
CROSSROADS MB CHURCH
AUGUST 7, 2022



JESUS THE SPECTACULAR FARMER



*“The Mighty One, God, the Lord, speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to where it sets.
From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth.
Our God comes and will not be silent.”
Psalm 50:1-3a*

ORDER OF SERVICE

Welcome

Worship in Song

Congregational Prayer Marvin Dyck

Children’s Feature

Scripture Reading *Mark 4:1-20*

Message *Jesus the Spectacular Farmer* Marvin Dyck

Communion

Worship in Song

The Lord’s Prayer & Announcements

**You are invited to Kildonan Park on Main Street for a picnic lunch
today at noon! Bring drive-thru or lunch bag and join others
from Crossroads while you eat your own lunches together.
Meet at the South Side Picnic Shelter.**

**Please note that Crossroads Sunday worship services
now live, recorded and posted on-line.*

**Crossroads strives to be a scent-reduced environment*

CROSSROADS INFORMATION

Information for this Sunday morning, August 7 at 10:00am:

You are invited to participate in Crossroads service either on-line or in-person.

In-person—We welcome you to 231 Kitson at 10:00am Masks suggested.

On-line—Crossroads worship service will be livestreamed at 10:00am and can also be viewed anytime on Youtube.com. Search for ‘CrossroadsMB Wpg’.

The donation basket can be found on Sunday morning on the foyer counter.

Options for donating Electronically: Bank e-transfers

Through ACU for monthly giving

Through Canada Helps—see link on the church website: crossroadsmb.ca

Want to do some in-depth Bible study or delve into key theological questions? Consider taking a course through **CMU’s Graduate School of Theology and Ministry for personal enrichment, professional development, or for academic credit.** All courses offered in-person and online. For more information, visit cmu.ca/gstm.

Xplore: At the Intersection of Faith and Life – Xplore offers life-long learning courses investigating dimensions of the Christian faith, our world, and life in it—all without any assignments or examinations! Join one or more of our six courses in-person or online Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings, beginning October 5. For information and to register visit cmu.ca/xplore.

“Mennonite Village Photography: Views from Manitoba, 1890–1940” by Mennonite Historic Arts Committee is currently on display at the MHC Gallery. The exhibition runs to September 10, 2022. Visit cmu.ca/gallery for more details.

Looking for meaningful work? MCC Manitoba is hiring a Volunteer & Youth Program Coordinator and MCC Canada has an opening in HR – Compensation & Benefits. For more information about these positions and to apply, visit mccmb.ca/openings.

Jesus the Spectacular Farmer Mark 4:1-20

1. Jesus' message

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” Mark 1:14-15

“...the term ‘has drawn nigh’ in such passages as...Mark 1:15...is best translated simply ‘has come.’

“...the reality of God’s rule...is present in action and available with and through the person of Jesus. That is Jesus’ gospel.” Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* HarperCollins 1997, 28

By words and actions, Jesus taught what it meant that He had brought God’s rule:

Your job is to turn your life around and do what Jesus tells you to do. 1:15-17

Where you’ve failed, God will forgive you (Mk 2:1-12).

Where you’re in pain, God wants to heal you. (repeated stories chapters 1-3)

Where evil forces control your mind, God wants to set you free. (1:23-26)

God wants to make you part of His family (3:34-5)”

2. The Story – The four soils

“The sower is not careless when he scatters the seed on the path or among the thorns or on the ground which has no depth of soil.” Lane, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: Mark* Eerdmans 1974, 153 “For a Palestinian farmer, some historians want to tell us, thirty-fold [30 times as much as was planted] was considered to be a high yield” Ewert, *He Spoke to Them in Parables* Heartbeat 2006. 14-15.

3. The Reason for speaking in parables 10-13

“...the parables were intended to provoke thought...” V. Taylor in Lane fn. 14, 153. “Jesus is not really aiming to *prevent* forgiveness. Instead, forgiveness is declared unavailable to those who reject God’s messenger....Mark has told us that Jesus’ enemies have already hardened their own hearts (Mark 3:5). Jesus’ enemies have made *themselves* outliers.” Geddert, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Mark* Herald 2001, 106 “Wouldn’t you join me in saying ‘I would not respect any God that I could figure out?’ St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) said the same: “If you understand it, then it *is* not God.” [1] [1] Augustine, Sermon 117:5 (on John 1:1).” “Richard Rohr Daily Meditation”, May 15, 2022 Meditations@cac.org

God...wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4, *New Living*

4. The Story’s Explanation

a) It’s the key to understanding all parables

Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 4:13

“The parable of the sower has first place in Mark...because of its meaning. It furnishes the ...ground for the understanding of the parables which follow.” Lane, 160.

b) God sends the word (His Good News 1:14) into people’s lives like seed 4:14-20

“Jesus spoke to them ‘the word,’ i.e., the word of God concerning the nearness of the kingdom and the necessity for repentance and faith (cf. Ch. 1:14f).” Lane, 93

“Although Mark does not identify the sower, it is clear from the context that in the first instance Jesus is meant. .. [H]owever, ... all those who proclaim and witness to the word of God are also sowers of the word. And ‘word’ ...was the good news of the kingdom of God that Jesus had in mind...a message which offered forgiveness of sins, and the gift of eternal life to all those who believed and became members of God’s kingdom.” Ewert 19

c) The 4 soils are 4 kinds of people’s lives

“The parable illustrates how differently people respond to the message of the kingdom.” Ewert 15.

ii) seed along the path – Satan snatches the seed away as soon as they hear the word that was sown in them See Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-24; Matthew 7:24-27

“Satan puts up fierce resistance to the message of the kingdom, and does everything within his power to neutralize the effect of God’s word on those who hear it...Satan attacks people in a great variety of ways. The first time we meet the evil one in the pages of scripture is in the garden of Eden (Gen 3:1-3), where, in the form of a serpent, he puts doubts about the word of God into the minds of our first parents. And, after putting God’s word in doubt, he flatly contradicts it (Gen 3:4).” Ewert 19-20.

ii) Seed sown on rocky places – received with joy but without root, fall away when there’s trouble or persecution because of the word

“Jesus...expects his followers to be subjected to persecution...and...difficulties... because they are kingdom people....It may seem strange that the message of the kingdom, which offers forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life, should become the occasion for persecution. But those who become members of Christ’s kingdom, have pledged their supreme loyalty to Christ as their Lord. They seek to live godly lives, and that makes them a kind of ‘contrast society,’ provoking unbelievers (although not deliberately) to harass and persecute Christ’s followers.” Ewert 20-21

iii) Seed sown among thorns – the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth, the desires for other things choke the word, making it unfruitful See Matthew 6:25-34

“Interestingly Jesus does not mention doubts or intellectual difficulties as reasons for falling away.” Ewert 22

iv) Seed sown on good soil – they hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop – thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.

“We were built to count, as water is made to run downhill. We are placed in a specific context to count in ways no one else does. That is our destiny.” Dallas Willard, *Divine Conspiracy* HarperSanFrancisco 1997, 15

“The main message [of this parable] is clear: *Some people hear the Word, but because their hearts are not fully receptive to the Word, they do not bear fruit in the end. Only those who truly accept the Word ultimately bear fruit.* Harder 107 in Geddert 99

Message Outline Continued on Next Page...

Message Outline Continued

d) Why doesn't the farmer pull the weeds before seeding?

By creating us with free will, God voluntarily limited His power. Only humans can pull the weeds and rocks out of their individual lives – and plough that path

“...the Kingdom of God breaks into the world even as seed which is sown upon the ground...God is at the center of the action. Lane 154 “...how is it that scribes and Pharisees can so misrepresent Him? And how is it that His kindred and disciples can totally fail to comprehend Him? Why does not the hearing of the doctrine produce the same result in every heart? The answer, as given by the Lord Himself, is that the operation of the divine word in the heart of men is not automatic, and that...the nature of the response is dictated by the nature of the heart that receives it...God sends rain on just and unjust alike (Mt. 5:45) and sends His word to men, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear (Ezk. 2:5)” A. Cole, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Mark* Eerdmans 1977, 89-90

e) Why does the farmer waste so much seed?

i) Because He wants to produce His fruit in every life.

God...wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4, *New Living*

“In summary, Mark 4 has thus far taught: The kingdom will flourish no matter who rejects it (vv. 3b-8). See to it that you respond correctly, and you will be part of the ultimately victorious kingdom (vv. 14-20). Your access to greater insight depends on your response to Jesus and his kingdom message (vv. 10-13). Therefore Listen! (vv. 3a, 9).” Geddert 100
“The specific threats and dangers along the way are spelled out clearly in the text. Hard-hearted people do not let the seed penetrate and germinate in their lives. Enthusiastic responses count for nothing, if there is no depth and persistence. Positive response to *the word* means rejecting competing words. If temptations of various kinds are given room to grow, they will displace an original wholehearted commitment to God's kingdom. Only receptive hearts, deep commitments, and single-minded allegiance can truly result in a harvest that corresponds to the bumper crop Jesus describes.” Geddert 99-100

ii) Every Jesus follower was once one or more of the first three kinds of soil (and must continually guard against the encroachment of those 3 soils).

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. Ephesians 2:1-2. [Verse 13 says, ‘If the message of the kingdom falls on fruitful soil (if you have *ears to hear*), you will learn to understand its meaning and perceive its presence, even though it comes secretly.’ The sower parable is about the kind of kingdom Jesus proclaims and the kind of hearing needed to understand.” Geddert 98

f) The harvest is at the end of time. The impact of your life can reverberate spectacularly far beyond your death! Stay faithful to Jesus.

“If the focus is on the abundant harvest, the parable is clearly about the kingdom of God, and about Jesus' proclamation of it. Then the message would be this:

There may be many obstacles along the way; there may be times when you are tempted to doubt the final victory of God's kingdom. But don't lose courage. A great and glorious harvest, greater than anything you can imagine, will finally be gathered in.”

Geddert 94

“...those who have responded with an affirmation of faith shall be found bearing fruit according to the law of a wonderful multiplication at the time of harvest, that is, in the judgment that comes with the consummation.” Lane 162-3