

# Lesson 6 — “Listening Hearts Grow”

*Text: Mark 4:1–20*

**Main Idea:** Jesus teaches us that God’s Word grows best in hearts that listen and obey.

**Key Memory Verse:** “Those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit.” (Mark 4:20 ESV)

## The Story Explained

### 1. Jesus Teaches a Big Crowd by the Lake (vv. 1–2)

Once again, a huge crowd gathered to hear Jesus teach. There were so many people that Jesus had to get into a boat and sit on the water. The people stood on the shore and listened carefully. Jesus taught them using stories called parables. Parables help people understand big ideas by using simple pictures.

### 2. Jesus Tells the Story of the Farmer (vv. 3–9)

Jesus said a farmer went out to plant seeds. He threw the seeds across the ground.

- Some seeds fell on a hard path. Birds came and ate them.
- Some seeds fell on rocky ground. They grew fast but had no roots, so they died.
- Some seeds fell among thorny plants. The thorns choked them.
- Some seeds fell on good soil. These seeds grew strong and produced lots of grain.

Jesus finished by saying, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen!”

### 3. Jesus Explains Why He Uses Stories (vv. 10–12)

Later, when Jesus was alone with his disciples, they asked him why he taught in stories. Jesus explained that parables help people who truly want to listen understand God’s truth. But people who do not want to listen often miss the meaning. Jesus wanted his followers to lean in, listen closely, and learn.

### 4. Jesus Explains the Meaning of the Seeds (vv. 13–20)

Jesus told his disciples what the story meant. The seed is God’s Word. The soil is people’s hearts.

- Some hearts are hard, and God’s Word does not stay.

- Some hearts listen at first but give up when things get hard.
- Some hearts are too busy or worried, and God’s Word gets crowded out.
- Some hearts are like good soil. They listen, believe, and obey.

Jesus said the hearts that listen and accept God’s Word grow strong and produce good fruit.

## Applications

### 1. God’s Word Is Like a Seed

When you hear a Bible story, God is planting a tiny seed in your heart. You might not see it right away, just like you don’t see a plant the moment a seed is planted. But that seed is important. God uses his Word to help you grow on the inside—to grow kinder, braver, more patient, and more loving.

Seeds need care to grow. God’s Word grows when you:

- Listen carefully
- Think about what you hear
- Pray and talk to God
- Try to obey what God says

Even if you don’t understand everything yet, that’s okay. God’s Word is still working in you. When you keep listening to Bible stories, those seeds grow into strong faith—and God helps you become the person He wants you to be.

### 2. Listening Carefully Matters

Jesus doesn’t just want us to hear sounds with our ears. He wants us to listen with our hearts. Listening carefully means:

- Looking at the person who is talking
- Paying attention instead of getting distracted
- Trying to remember what you hear
- Thinking about how to obey

When you listen carefully to God’s Word, it’s like opening your heart and saying, “God, I’m ready to learn.” Sometimes it’s hard to listen—you might feel tired or want to play instead. But every time you choose to listen, your heart grows stronger. When you pay attention to God’s Word, your heart becomes good soil—ready to grow, ready to learn, and ready to follow Jesus.

### 3. Hard Times Help Our Roots Grow

Sometimes following Jesus is not easy. You might feel tired, confused, or upset. You might have to do the right thing when it feels hard. Jesus knows that hard times happen. He told this story so we would understand that hard times don't mean we stop following him. When a plant has strong roots, it can stand tall even when the wind blows. In the same way, when you keep trusting Jesus during hard moments, your faith grows deep roots. Hard times can help your faith grow when you:

- Keep praying
- Keep being kind
- Keep obeying even when it's hard
- Ask Jesus for help

Every time you trust Jesus instead of giving up, your faith becomes stronger—and Jesus is right there helping your roots grow.

### 4. Jesus Wants Our Hearts to Be Good Soil

Jesus wants your heart to be like good soil—soft, ready, and open to God's Word. A good heart listens when God's Word is taught, believes what God says, and tries to obey even when it's hard. When God's Word grows in your heart, people can see it in how you live. It shows when you:

- Are kind instead of mean
- Tell the truth
- Help others
- Say "I'm sorry" when you mess up
- Choose what is right

You don't have to grow all at once. Plants grow little by little—and so do you. When you ask Jesus to help your heart stay soft, he helps God's Word grow in you every day.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus teach the people using a story?
2. What happened to the seeds that fell on the good soil?
3. What does the seed stand for in the story?
4. What kind of heart does Jesus want us to have?
5. How can you listen better to God's Word this week?