

Renewal: The Resilient Follower

| KEY THOUGHTS

- Our heart condition determines our faith condition.
- Resilient Heart: A faith that can endure criticism, callousness and crisis throughout seasons of life.
- Un-resilient hearts conform to culture instead of transforming culture.
- We must actively fight pride and fear to break up the fallow ground in our hearts.
- The most important part of a plant is the part no one sees. The most important part of your faith is the part no one sees.
- Deeper roots in God's truth keeps us steady in an ever-changing culture.
- Latching on to cultural ideologies will choke out the good fruit you produce.
- A heart that is restored by the reign of Jesus becomes more receptive to see, hear, and understand His truth.
- We must actively continue to dig up the ground of our hearts to cultivate good soil.
- Depth builds resistance
- Resistance builds resilience.
- Resilient followers build God's Kingdom and bring renewal.
- "The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people."
- Open and humble your heart.
- Choose action and faithfulness when your heart is weary.

| SCRIPTURE

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Matthew 13:1-8

| APPLICATION

- The hard soil represents those who hear Jesus' preaching about the kingdom, who hear the message of God, but it bounces right off of them. This is the person who does not recognize themselves as standing in any relation to the word which they hear, or to the kingdom of grace which that word proclaims. There is no rooting in the soil of the heart.
- The rocky soil is shallow. These people are followers who begin well, but fail to continue to follow the Lord faithfully; the people who experience a high with Jesus but then it goes away quickly; those that depend on emotionalism in their faith. They are intrigued by Jesus, but half-hearted in following Him.
- The thorny soil represents those who allow other concerns of life to crowd out their commitment to Jesus. Attention, affection, and truth are given to the present life over the life to come; the present pleasure over the kingdom of God; the current circumstance over biblical truth.
- The good soil stands for the person who understands the message about the kingdom and is *receptive* to it. Jesus reigns in these hearts. The fruit becomes evident in their lives, as does their increasing understanding of divine truth.
- If we don't have deep roots, we will collapse. But the beautiful thing is that God will use all the external stressors, the things in life that try to knock us down, to build resistance.
- We have to fight fear, pride, and laziness. We have to constantly till the ground to let our hearts come back to good soil. In order to do that, we need to be open, humble, and faithful.

| REFLECTION

- What do you think causes a defensive heart, an indifferent heart, or an indoctrinated heart? How do you combat that?
- Jesus built His ministry by going deep with the few, rather than shallow with the public. Why do you think that is?
- How does depth build resistance? How does resistance build resilience?
- Which kind of soil do you think your heart is at currently?