



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: A Fruitful Life**  
**Speaker: Rich Villodas – Lead Pastor**  
**Scriptures: Mark 4:1-9**

### **The Parable of the Sower**

4 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. 2 He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: 3 "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

9 Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

### **Sermon Summary:**

On this first Sunday of 2026, we will continue our Gospel of Mark Series by turning to a passage of Scripture that helps us lay a strong foundation for a fruitful spiritual year. Together, we will explore Jesus' Parable of the Sower and reflect on what the four soils reveal about our hearts and our lives of faith.

### **Sermon Questions:**

1. Do you have any intentional ways you are starting the year like reflection, resolutions, goal-setting or a word for the year? If so, what are they? Share what has worked well for you and/or how you have struggled in the past.
2. Reread the parable and make observations about the passage. Remember, a parable is an earthly story with a kingdom meaning and Jesus wants his word and kingdom to take root in our lives. What do you think this parable teaches us about God's kingdom?
3. The parable starts, "A farmer went out to sow his seed," and paints a picture of God's generosity because the farmer scatters on all different types of soil. Some may find this wasteful, but Jesus isn't talking about God's efficiency, he's describing God's generosity. We serve a God of abundance. How has God been generous to you?
4. The parable describes four different soils that represent the state of our hearts. Which soil do you think currently describes your heart: hard, rocky/shallow, cluttered, or good?

A hard heart develops when our hurts and disappointments are never tended to and it creates ideal ground for Satan to steal. Rocky or shallow soil doesn't have a good root system and is developed out of convenience. To follow Jesus is to orient your life around his word and it can be uncomfortable. Cluttered soil is when the worries and greediness of this world choke out our growth. It means we are preoccupied with the things of the world and getting more. Good soil is not about perfect people, but those who are open to God's word and will in their life.