

▼ **Focus, Faith, and Fulfillment - Part 4**

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- **Read the Passage: Matthew 17:14-27**

▼ **Re-focus on the Kingdom. - How?**

- What kind of soil are you? - Matthew 13:1-23 (Parable of the Sower)

▼ The Path - (you don't understand the message)

- You need to hear it again and again. You need to ask questions.

▼ Rocky Soil (you have no root)

- How do you handle difficulty? Do you talk to God about it?
- Take up your cross - Matthew 16:21-26

▼ Thorny Soil (you are preoccupied with other things)

- Hate father and mother - Luke 14:25-35
- You have fallen from your first love. - Revelation 2:1-7
- It's not about your comfort OR convenience!
- Kingdom work is not just for "other people" or "professionals".

▼ Good Soil (you bear much fruit)

- Commitment to prayer, the Word, fellowship, and outreach.
- Normal Christianity - life group; Welcome, Worship, Word, Works
- ▼ Do you meet with Jesus regularly? How else can you follow him?
 - Bread of Life - John 6:25-71
 - Have you learned how to get an answer from God?

▼ **Take Jesus' identity, authority, and mission seriously. - How?**

- In both stories we see failure to engage his identity, authority, mission.

▼ Note Jesus' attitude:

▼ Disappointment with "Little faith" - failure to fully engage.

- Matthew 6:30 - Little faith: Will God not much more clothe you?
- Matthew 8:23-27 - Little faith: Jesus calms the storm.
- Matthew 14:31 - Little faith: Jesus rescues Peter on the water.
- Matthew 16:8 - Little faith: Disciples' concern about no bread.

▶ Surprised by great faith: Matthew 8:5-13 - The centurion's faith.

▼ Disappointment with stubbornness:

- Matthew 11:20-24 - Jesus denounces cities that didn't repent.
- ▶ Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6 - Man with shriveled hand.
- It is possible to take God's Kingdom seriously and yet not understand the full implications of Jesus' identity, authority, and mission.
- ▼ We need to reflect deeply on Jesus' mission and its implications.
 - The Big Picture - we go up the "ladder of abstraction" to see the big picture and then carry it with us in everything we do.
 - The Kingdom of God is near.
 - Jesus is King. He's on the throne now. He got there via the cross.
 - It's about joining God in reclaiming this broken world, not heaven.
 - The Sermon on the Mount is what Kingdom life looks like.
 - Jesus advanced the Kingdom by going where the Spirit led him and unleashing God's power through the Spirit to bless people in need.
- ▼ **Take your mission seriously.**
 - One church with one mission: proclaiming the good news of God's Kingdom.
 - God is reclaiming our broken world through Jesus and his followers. We each need to be on point and do our part.
 - ▶ To take Jesus' mission seriously, you must take your own mission seriously! Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons, etc. - Matthew 9:35 - 10:16; Matthew 28:18-20; Galatians 3:1-5; John 20:21-23
 - Failure to engage who Jesus is and what he's doing leads to lack of faith, which limits what we can do for others.
 - Faith in Jesus acknowledges our ignorance, vulnerability, and discomfort.
- ▼ Advance God's Kingdom by moving in the Spirit!
 - Debit or credit? Your account, the Church's, or Jesus'?
 - Use Jesus' debit card! - Matthew 6:30-44; Acts 3; Acts 4:23-31
- ▼ **Do your job! Enjoy the adventure.**
 - We can't be spectators - we have to be "all in".
 - ▶ Ministry "professionals" are called to prepare and equip believers for their various ministries NOT doing their ministries for them! - Ephesians 4:1-16
 - Surf the waves! - Acts 15:36 - 17:15
- ▼ **Discussion / Reflection Questions:**
 - Where are you prepared to take the Kingdom next?
 - What stepping stones have we identified?