

Matthew 20-11-29b

Let's continue our study. Now we're looking at Matthew chapter 13. I'm going to pick up the pace here a little bit.

We want to not be overconfident in our rightness. The definition that I like of humility is teachability. If someone can't learn, if they can't consider a different point of view, a different perspective, a different priority, a different thought, a different value, you're not teachable.

If you're not teachable, you are not humble. You're arrogant. Arrogance and pride blinds us.

And we're going to see this concept of blindness in this parable. But let me ask you another quiz question. I'd like to keep your hamster running in his little wheel up there.

So without looking at your page, without looking at Matthew chapter 13, just from memory, and I will tell you in advance, this is a bit of a trick question. How many kinds of soil are there? And don't just think you're right when you count them. How many kinds of soil are there? Let's see if we can remember.

There's first the hard packed soil by the path. The birds pick up that seed and carry it away. That's the hard packed, right? Then there's other, which is the shallow stony soil where the seed goes in and springs up in a day and then the sun hits and it shrivels, right? There's the kind that gets a little deeper, but it's choked by thorns and such and isn't productive.

And then there's the soil where it does grow and produce a crop, right? So you might start out saying there's four kinds of soil, but how many kinds of good soil are there? Some 30, that's your fourth kind, some 60, and some a hundredfold. So you'd say, okay, I've got total, if you want to be picky, which I am, there's six kinds of soil. And I would submit that you'd still be wrong.

In the Sam Hull reference Bible, there are seven kinds of soil. Which one have we not talked about? All of the soil where the seed is not sprinkled. This is only soil where the seed hits, right? And it's important to think about that because a sower goes forth to sow.

Let's say you're going to put in a garden in your backyard or in your pasture or wherever you're going to put it. So you go out and buy, have you tried buying seed? That stuff is expensive. It's not cheap.

So you've got this, and in the ancient world, seed was relatively precious. You don't go to Walmart and buy your seed in the ancient Near East. So where is this guy going to sow his seed? The sower goes forth to sow.

Now, if this is Jesus preaching the gospel of salvation, where should this seed be going? I'm Johnny Appleseed. I'm walking down the road. I'm broadcasting this stuff in the highways and byways and, you know, quote, compelling them to come.

I'm broadcasting it everywhere. All of the soil needs this seed. The great vast majority of the planet is not getting this seed.

Where is the sower sowing the seed? His ground. I don't go across the road and sow my seeds and plant my garden on my neighbor's acreage. I want it inside my fence line.

I want to tend it. I want to nurture it. I want to weed it and water it and fertilize it and care for it and protect it from nibblers and invaders and deer and rabbits.

And I want to gather that fruit into my storehouse. So as far as I'm concerned, and, you know, feel free to disagree. I think there's seven kinds of soil.

Six refer to Israel and the seventh where the seed is not being sown. The gospel of the kingdom is not being preached outside the boundaries of Israel. You will not have gone through the towns and cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes, Jesus says.

We saw that in our end time study. So important because if he is sowing seed on his ground, this establishes a relationship. The soil belongs to the sower.

You could make some kind of argument that he's a servant and he's a proxy for the guy that owns the acreage. It doesn't really matter. The seed is being sown on owned land in the interest of the owner and the sower for all intents and purposes.

This is like an angel speaking in the first person for God. He's an intermediary, but the owner of the land wants this seed sown in his soil and he wants it to be maximally productive, right? It's in his interest. So he owns the field.

So what does the field represent? What does the soil represent? The people that belong to God. It's just another reinforcement to understand what this parable is talking about. This is teaching of the good news of the kingdom to God's people, Israel specifically.

As we move to the interpretation and application, we can see that it is an example of God teaching divine truth to his people and looking for the response. Makes sense. All right.

So why do you speak to them in parables in verse 13 of Matthew 13? This is 13, 13. I speak to them in parables because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled.

I just want to give you a quick review here. How many times were we told the purpose for Jesus' mother and brothers at the end of chapter 12? How many times did it tell us what they were here to do? Twice. They have come to speak with you.

Jesus' mother and brothers came to speak with him and the people came inside and said, Lord, your mother and brothers are here to speak with you. We're told twice. I speak to them in parables and we're going to get this twice because seeing they do not see, hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

In them, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says, hearing you will hear and shall not understand, seeing you will see and not perceive. For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, their eyes they have closed.

Notice it's not their eyes have been closed or their eyes were blind from birth. What's wrong with their eyes? Why are their eyes not functioning properly? In Jesus' quote of Isaiah, what does it say? They have closed their eyes. Who's responsible for this lack of penetration of the truth? You could argue that, well, their hearts have grown dull.

Maybe that's the fault of bad teaching and poor religious leadership and cultural oppression or whatever else. Maybe it's not their fault. Their eyes, they have closed.

And when it says lest, this is even stronger in Greek than it is in the original Hebrew, which we're about to look at. But this basically means otherwise, the alternative, probably the best translation where it says lest, alternatively, they should, or they could, or they would. This lest is a turning point in a construction that means I've given you one side, here's the other side, here's what could have happened.

But Calvinists come to this, people that are of the reformed persuasion and say, see, God doesn't want them to see. He doesn't want them to hear. I talk in parables because I don't want them to understand.

And they'll force that viewpoint into this. Lest they should see, lest they should understand and turn so that I should heal them. If I gave them the naked truth in unvarnished, plain Aramaic, they would turn and I would heal them.

And I don't want that. That's how this is read by some. I mean, seriously, people will come to this and their little magnetic compass tells them, well, that's got to be the way to take this passage.

Why? Because I've got a grid, I've got an understanding, and I'm going to fit Scripture into my understanding instead of letting Scripture create my understanding, define my understanding. It doesn't help any that it's in English and it says, lest. And we say, well, we can't let that happen.

I don't want that to happen. This is not an, I don't want it to happen. How do I know this? What is one of our primary, along with context, context, context, what's another one of our primary rules of interpreting Scripture? When the New Testament quotes the Old Testament, what is that? That's a footnote.

That means op sit. That means go look, see the full context. I'm just giving you a footnote.

It's like what we have in the internet days as a link. Click the link. So this quote, and if you've got any kind of a decent reference Bible that tells you this is out of Isaiah chapter six, to which please turn.

And again, I'm going to move somewhat rapidly here, but go to the middle of your Old Testament, find Isaiah. If you hit Psalms, go to the right a little bit, find Isaiah chapter six, and you are in the throne room of God. And Isaiah is called to be a prophet.

Don't have time to review the wonderful scene there. But in verse eight, after Isaiah is commissioned and cleansed and equipped to be a prophet, God says, whom shall I send? And who will go for us? I said, here am I send me. So he says in verse nine, Isaiah six, go and tell this people, okay, I need somebody to go.

You're the one that has stuck up your hand and said, I will go. So here's your message. Tell this people.

And everything he's supposed to tell them is in these next four lines. Keep on hearing, but do not understand. Keep on seeing, but do not perceive end quote.

That's the message. Keep on hearing and not understanding. Keep on seeing and not perceiving.

Just keep it up. Keep doing what you're doing. Make now God is talking to Isaiah and he says, Isaiah, go deliver that message.

Make the heart of this people dull. You say, aha. See, they're not making their own heart dull.

Isaiah is making their heart dull. God says to Isaiah, make the people's hearts dull, make their ears heavy. Lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and return and be healed.

Isaiah says, how long should I do this? Is this a lifelong commission? He says, no, do it until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant. The houses are without a man. The land is utterly desolate.

The Lord has removed men far away and forsaken places are multiplied in the midst of the land, but yet a 10th will be in it. Now notice if you stopped reading in verse 11 and 12, the houses are without a man. The land is utterly desolate.

The Lord has removed men far away. This is a anticipation of the captivity. The Lord has removed men far away and forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

So it sounds like everybody's gone. If you stop there, but if you keep reading a 10th will remain one out of 10 are going to still be there and will return and be for consuming as a terebinth tree or as an Oak whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed will serve as a stump.

There's going to be a remnant. This thing of the 10th is real interesting. We don't have time to go into it, but if you remember at the end of Genesis chapter 18, when God has come down and is speaking with the progenitor of all of these people, Abraham and God and his two accompanying angels, destroying angels and delivering angels visit with Abraham.

And God says, shall I hide from Abraham? What I'm about to do. I'm going to destroy these five cities of the plane, including Sodom. Abraham says, well, I've got my nephew lot there.

And so then Abraham begins this pleading. Well, Lord, if there are 50 righteous men in the city, would you spare it? Sodom is huge. There's thousands of people.

They've, they've uncovered a little bit of, of, uh, ancient evidence about Sodom. It's a huge place. If there are 50 righteous, will you spare it? God says, if there, if I can find 50, I'll spare it.

Everyone says, well, if there were 45, would you spare it for the sake of the 45? And you remember how he works the Lord down to 10. If there are 10 righteous men in Sodom, now this is not a 10th, but it's just 10. And I think Abraham's figuring, well, let's see lot.

Mrs. Lot daughter, one daughter to betrothed man, one betrothed man to that six. Surely there's four other people besides the lot family. It's gotta be 10.

So when he, when he, he's satisfied when the Lord says, if there's 10, I'll spare it. Of course there's not, there there's actually, actually not any one, if you count lot, but his wife dies on the way out. His daughters turn into the ancestresses of Moab and Ammon through incest.

Uh, yeah, it's a pretty, pretty rough story, but there weren't 10. God says, I'm going to leave a 10th. But why is he doing this? Go and tell this people, keep on seeing and not perceiving, keep on hearing and not understanding.

Why is that the prophetic message? And it's the one that Jesus quotes. Why is Isaiah sent with this message? You may be a little fuzzy on our long trip through Kings and prophets, but flip the page back in Isaiah two chapter five, the same Lord God says, let me sing to my well beloved, a song of my beloved regarding his vineyard. My well beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful Hill.

He dug it up and cleared out its stones, planted it with the choices vine, built a tower in

its midst, made a wine press, expecting it to bring forth produce grapes. It's been protected. It's been plowed.

It's been cultivated. It's been planted. And his expectation is I'm going to put in a wine press because I'm going to get the juice.

I'm going to make wine. This is real wine. It's not grape juice.

My beloved planted a vineyard and his goal is wine. Now, Oh, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done to my vineyard that I've not done? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth grapes, did it bring forth inedible stuff? It's supposed to be good grapes and they're wild grapes.

These are kind of like, these are not grapes you can use for anything. Let me tell you what I'll do to my vineyard. I'll take away its hedge.

It'll be burned. I'll break down his wall. It should be trampled.

I'll lay it waste. It won't be pruned or dug. There shall come up what briars and thorns.

What's in our parable for the third kind of soil briars and thorns grow up and choke the seed, choke the word. I'll command the clouds that they rain, no rain on it. Provision will be removed for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is what does it say in verse seven, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel.

And the men of Judah are his pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold oppression. He looked for righteousness, but behold, there's a cry.

This is help. Then he gives these woes. There's a woe in verse eight, a woe in verse 11.

There's a woe in verse 18. There's woe in verse 20. There's a woe in verse 21.

Woe in verse 22, uh, verse 24, as the fire devours, the stubble, as the flame consumes the chaff. So their root will be as rottenness and their blossom will ascend like dust. Why? Because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts and despise the word of the Holy one of Israel circle it and put next to that Isaiah chapter six, verse nine.

Why is Isaiah sent and to say, keep on hearing and not understanding, keep on seeing and don't perceive because this has been a pattern that has established itself so firmly that there is now no hope for these people. That's why the last in verse 10 less they see with their eyes and hear with their ears is an abstraction. They're not going to, because they are the people of chapter five, verse 24.

Therefore, in verse 25 of that chapter five, the anger of the Lord is aroused against his people. He has stretched out his hand against them and stricken them in the hills. Tremble.

Their carcasses are as refuse in the midst of the street. For all this is anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out. Still, he's going to lift up a banner and he's going to bring foreign invaders and so on.

Why? Because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts and despise the word of the Holy one of Israel. This is a pre existing situation brought about by negative choice, preexisting hardness of heart, blindness of spirit, deafness to the word of the Lord. This blindness and deafness and hardness of heart is by choice.

You don't go deaf overnight. Typically, unless it's from an explosion, you don't typically go blind immediately. It's usually a process.

Hardness of heart is a process. It's like hardening of the arteries. The plaque builds up over time and when it reaches a certain stage, it's irreversible.

It's like Sodom. You can't even find 10 righteous men. That's why Isaiah is sent and he's going to preach and he's going to give a lot of messages.

Look how long the book is. He's going to deliver a lot of messages to Israel, but they're all still going to go into captivity because they are going to hear and not understand. They're going to see and not perceive.

He's going to try to deliver these. They're pictorial messages. There are graphic messages.

There are expository messages. There are explanatory messages. He preaches and preaches and preaches and preaches and it falls on deaf ears, blind eyes and hard hearts and they end up going out in discipline.

So in summary, God says, I'm going to send you and you are going to expose their blindness and they are blind by choice. You are going to expose their deafness and they are deaf by choice. Go back to chapter five.

What have they done? I didn't give you all the details of the woes, but when you read the woes, these are things they have done by choice. God didn't harden their hearts and make them this way, make them violent and insensitive and self-centered and self-gratifying. They did that by choice.

So God says, I'm going to send a word of repentance and deliverance and when you deliver it, you're going to show that they hear and don't understand, that they see and don't perceive. That's what you're going to do. That's what Jesus is doing.

Back to Matthew chapter 13. Hearing you will hear and shall not understand. Seeing you will see and not perceive.

Therefore, I speak to them in parables. But verse 16, blessed are your eyes for they see

and your ears for they hear. It has been given to you to understand.

You remember back in verse 11, it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom. Predestination election types say, see, they were elect. And so they were given the insight when Jesus spoke, they can understand it because it was given to them.

Is that true? Careful now. Is that true? That they were able to understand what Jesus was teaching because it was given to them, the ability to understand was given to them by God. Is that true? Yes, absolutely.

The carnal mind can't understand the things of the spirit. It was given to them to understand. The question is not, was it given to them? The question is, why was it given to them? Why was it given to the disciples to understand the mysteries of the kingdom? And to them, it was not given.

Calvinists will say it was the inscrutable for ordination, predestination and election of God. He, you know, through a series of darts at the phone book of human history and whoever's name got hit, they're going to be elect. It's inscrutable.

We don't know why scripture is replete with telling us why read Isaiah chapter five, before you read chapter six, read Isaiah and see that after God did everything for this vineyard, it didn't produce what it was supposed to read the condemnation of the choices that people made. They rejected the law and they rejected the word of the Lord. They chose to disregard it.

They chose to disobey it. They chose to set it aside and go their own way. That's why their ears can no longer hear and their eyes can no longer see.

Remember the seed that falls on the hard packed soil and the birds of the air come and take it away. This is the word coming to believers, people who belong to God. Let me sing you a song about my vineyard, not all vineyards, not all soil in the world, my vineyard.

I hedged it around. I put in a tower. I cultivated, I sent a vine dresser to tend it and to care for it.

I did everything that should have brought forth good grapes. And these vines just went bad and it wasn't the vineyard owner or the vine dressers fault. And of course, plants, as far as I know, don't have a chooser, but people do.

And when it should have been good and it wasn't, and you're talking about people, that's a choice. It's a choice we choose. Now, can you reach the point where you can no longer choose the good? Can you make an early pattern of corrosive thinking and pursuing thoughts that eventually make it impossible to return and be normal? Absolutely.

But aberrant behavior, generally speaking, is a product of choice and evil lifestyle, evil conduct, evil standards and priorities and goals and values are the product, not just of a choice, but of choices. A lot of time to plant a vineyard and wait for those vines to grow old enough to be productive and find out what they're really like. But if the vines in that soil uptake the wrong kind of nutrients, take in the wrong things, you know, they can alter vegetables and fruit by putting stuff in the water they water it with, and it's taken up into the plant.

You can have an organic field and pollen drifts in from an adjacent field that's not organic and is GMO and the DNA gets corrupted and the plant, you know, essentially mates with plants that are outside the field. It takes that DNA in and it becomes no longer original, no longer what was growing here before man started monkeying with the genomes. What do we take in? It changes us.

What we choose to take in determines what kind of fruit we produce. That's why we want to be that Psalm 1 man who is planted by the river. He shall be like a tree planted by the river that brings forth his fruit in his season.

His leaf doesn't wither and whatever he does will prosper because he doesn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the scornful. He makes a choice to not do that. Nobody drags people into the way of sinners.

Nobody forces you to sit in the seat of the scornful and buckles a seat belt and locks it. It's choice. The one who has the law of the Lord and in that law doth he meditate day and night, that's what he puts into his soul.

That's the one planted by the river of life bringing forth his fruit in his season. It's a choice. If you don't remember anything else about the parable of the sowers, remember all of this soil, all of it represents choice and the condition of the soil when the sower, because remember the gospel of the kingdom is not all of God's truth for his people, is it? Why is it important to remember that the seed is the gospel of the kingdom? What is the good news of the kingdom? It's not the law of Moses.

It's not thou shalt have no other gods before me and the other commandments on the tables of stone, is it? What is the gospel of the kingdom? Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his path straight. These exalted hills need to be flattened out.

These valleys need to be filled in. Make an environment in your heart and in your soul and prepare for the arrival of the king and the kingdom. This is the finish.

This is the payoff. This is the promise and reward for the faithful, right? We've been talking about end times and the judgment seat of Christ in the future in the kingdom of the father. Do you have your name written in the book? Are you going to have access to the city and the tree? Will you dwell therein? Will they let you through the 12 gates or

not? What is that good news? Good news of the kingdom of the father, right? How many believers are insensate to that coming judgment and that coming restriction, that coming reality that there are going to be most people in the kingdom of the father outside the city in the darkness, which is outside with their portion in the lake of fire that burns forever and ever? How many Christians are thinking about that? What's happening to that gospel of the kingdom today? What kind of soil is it hitting? We want to be the people where when that gospel of the kingdom, our gospel of our coming kingdom hits, it sinks deep and it produces fruit.

We're motivated. Our hope motivates faith and ultimately love, love for each other and love for God. And that love toward one another means I'm going to grab that magnetic compass deal and I'm going to check it against another standard.

When I went to Lebanon and all these magnetic aiming circles were screwed up, I had to go to the stars. We didn't have GPS. We had a position azimuth detection device, a pads thing that was down in Beirut and I was up outside of Zuni and I had to wait a couple of weeks before those guys could come and give me any kind of survey.

So I went to the stars. There's a procedure called Polaris Kochab, and you go there at night and you take that aiming circle and instead of looking at the magnetic needle that is built into it, you use it and you site on Polaris and you site on Kochab and you measure the deflection in mills and you use a chart and a table and you do some interpolation and you can figure out where you are from the stars because they're an absolute reference. The stars are the stars and for our purposes they don't move.

And I was able to get a much better directional control and that's how I thought, what is the matter with these aiming circles? And I look over here and here's this power pole. Well, that's what we need. The Word of God is our celestial guide.

That's how we check our truth teller, our rightness meter. It divides the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow. It is a judge of the thoughts and intents of our heart, but it's got to be there.

If you're busy getting soaked in social media or mainstream news or alt-right news or alt-left news or whatever it is that circulates in so many minds today, you don't need that. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, as a member of His body, don't get paralyzed. Don't get directed by some other force.

You ever been in physical therapy and they put those electrodes on you and make your muscles twitch without your control? It's weird. They did it to me once and I said, stop that. I don't like it and I don't want it.

I don't want you making me twitch when I'm not telling my muscles to twitch. I don't care. I said, how's that helping my torn rotator cuff that you're making my shoulder

muscle twitch? Well, it has nothing to do with your shoulder.

It distracts your mind from the pain in the joint. What? So I'm deceiving my mind about the status of my shoulder by twitching. It's wrong on so many levels.

To me, listen, if you go to PT, go be warm, be fit. I'm not telling everybody how to do their physical therapy. I'm sure it helps people.

But for me that the spiritual analogy was just too strong. I don't want something else getting in control in my body. The Lord Jesus doesn't want something else getting in and controlling His body.

If we move, it ought to be because the Lord Jesus is impelling us to move, persuading us to move, sending us direction and instruction through His word and His spirit. That's how the body operates, not talking heads on little screens or large, not even my talking head. It's the word of God.

You imbibe it. You digest it. You pray over it.

You analyze it and reflect on it day and night. You be the tree planted by the river of water. You're not planted by the pastor.

You're not planted by the newsman. You're planted by the river of water and the water is the word of God. That's what corrects us.

That's what rebukes us. We have to be rebukeable. We have to be instructable.

And it's the word of God that does it. And find any source that faithfully communicates what's in the word. Open up your own Bible and pray, ask, seek and knock.

And we've all got the Holy Spirit. It's wonderful to have somebody that can spend a little extra time and try to bring some things to light. But you're not dependent on any pastor, any teacher, any commentator, secular or spiritual.

God didn't only give the Holy Spirit to pastors and teachers. Why have you got the Holy Spirit? Discernment. He will lead you into all truth.

He will remind you of the words of truth. He will illuminate the path. He will direct our steps.

He will help us to see. He's not a puppet master. You don't just yield and say, oh, use me, control me, operate me.

I'm just an empty tractor. Get in the seat and turn me on and plow. We are choosers.

We are people with choice. And that's what these soils are all about. These soils, these six kinds of soils are all believers in varying states of receptivity, response, blindness or

lack thereof.

All you have to do is go back to Isaiah chapter four, chapter five, chapter six, which Jesus directly quotes and references. Matthew has the longest version of this parable for a reason, and I'm spending time on it and going along for a reason. We have a gospel of the kingdom.

And we have a responsibility for that word to sink in and to not be left blind and not be left deaf and not be left misdirected and making the wrong choices, setting the wrong priorities, pursuing the wrong goals, operating in the light of the wrong values. Fine to have opinions, fine to be aware of current events and politics and the rest of it, but that's not our life and it's not our future. Ultimately our eternal fate, the everlasting life that we will soon enter has nothing to do with any of this stuff on the news, whether it's medical or political, it has everything to do with what's in our heart.

What kind of soil are we? Am I going to let the cares of this life choke the word and make it unfruitful? Am I so convinced that I'm right, that I'm unteachable? I'm hard packed soil just bounces off. Do I get real enthusiastic because Bible class was interesting today? I heard something I hadn't heard before, saw something in a verse I didn't see before. This to me is the scariest one is the stony soil.

And I'll leave you with this thought. I am the first one to get excited when I learned something new. Remember what Jesus says, that soil receives it with joy.

Oh boy, this is stimulating. This is refreshing. This is new.

This is different. I like this. I'm going to find somebody and talk about this.

Receive it with joy, he says. But what happens? It doesn't sink in very deep. It doesn't have any root.

It doesn't make a permanent difference. Springs up in a day. But when the sun, what does the sun represent by the way? Is that like a weird eclipse type event? Sun comes up every day.

When real life happens, when normal day happens and the sun rises up in the sky. Oh, it's the day. Look around, look at everything that's going on.

And that plant that sprung up so quickly and, and, and was so infused with joy withers away. And soon is, you know, the grass withers, the flower fades. It's the word of God that abides forever.

But if your life and fruit of your life doesn't represent the word, it's going to wither away just like the grass and the flower. Flower's beautiful. That's why it always pains me to buy cut flowers and give them to somebody because I know, you know, that's like

creating a puff of colored smoke.

You know, look at that. Isn't that pretty? And it's almost immediately gone. When I can, I like to give live plants because you can plant the thing and it's the gift that keeps on giving.

But cut flowers, it's just, Oh my gosh, I just killed this for you here. Enjoy it before it wilts. So this is food for thought.

We need to think about this. What kind of person am I? And the scariest one to me personally is the shallow soil receives the word with joy. If you're listening to the sound of my voice, I know you are someone who appreciates the word and loves to learn just like me.

That's why we're together. That's why our church has lasted so long. This is what we share.

The danger in our particular emphasis is that the effect of the word doesn't last. We're stimulated by learning it. We receive it with joy, but it doesn't produce that 30 fold, 60 fold, a hundred fold durable crop.

How could that happen? We don't keep returning to it. We don't implant it deeply. The one who loves God and loves his word, that tree planted by the river in that law, doth he meditate? He reflects, he thinks about it.

He compares his life to that standard. He looks at his rightness meter, his aiming circle, his magnetic compass, and says, am I really pointing at north? What do I need to adjust? You know, a magnetic needle never points to true north. You always have to make a correction.

If you want to find true north, our rightness meter is never perfect. We always need to compare it to the absolute standard always. And we've got to keep doing that and keep being suspicious of ourselves.

Easy to be suspicious and dubious and skeptical of others. We should be dubious, skeptical, and suspicious of that little thing that says I'm right. As long as we're willing to get that thing corrected, we're teachable, we're humble, and immediately the multiplier on our crop increases.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for how powerfully it convicts and instructs when we need rebuke and correction.

We know that when you love us, you discipline us and you scourge the sons that you receive. We pray that we can be responsive to that correction, that we can grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and receive the good news of the

coming kingdom that is in our future, not only with joy in the present, but with enduring patience and perseverance, faith and obedience to qualify and to continue to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus both now and in that coming age. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.