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Traders Point, how are we doing? It's so good to be with you—everyone at the campuses, everyone online, welcome. I'm loving this week. We're coming off a really big week last week with Easter.

Hear this, please. There were 108 people who got baptized last weekend--108! Unbelievable. If you're one of the 108, so glad you are back and you're here with us. You picked a great time.

We're kicking off a brand new series of messages called *Dirt*. And I just want to throw it out there, for everyone watching online and in the room, you can be audible in this. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word dirt? Just throw it out.

What was it? Boys? You all are the worst. Did you know I am a boy? Mud, wet dirt. That's also what it is. Honestly, the first thing, it's close to boys but I put it all together. Kids. When I think of dirt I think of kids, my three. And I'll show you a picture.

That's their hands. This wasn't a science project, this was just a Tuesday. They are out there looking for worms digging in dirt. Kids are dirt magnets. I know because I was one.

But what we're going to look at in this series is that dirt is for more than making messes. Dirt is a natural medium for growth.

That's what we're going to be looking at. Dirt is comparable to our hearts, in a lot of ways. There are things that can grow there and not grow there, depending on what's in the soil, what's in the dirt.

To look at this, we're going to be studying one parable for four weeks. We're going to be looking at this one specific one:

#### Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed

And it's in Luke 8. That's the one we're going to be reading from.

Just to give you a little bit of a breakdown of what this is. A parable was just a type of story Jesus would tell. He told a lot of different stories. He was a master storyteller. These stories, they had different characters, different plots. But they had one theme. All of the stories were connected to this one theme:

#### The Kingdom of God.

That's what Jesus came onto the scene talking about. Preaching that there is a new kingdom and to take notice because everything is about to change.

And what's surprising, maybe to you, about a parable is that a parable wasn't necessarily easy to understand. A lot of times when Jesus would get up to teach or speak, a lot of people left confused, not understanding what was going on. That was intentional. You see, these stories we read, they were actually invitations—invitations that people could hear and then begin to see and think differently if they would be willing to place their hearts in the hand of God.

What he was trying to do was shake things up. He was trying to till up their hearts. Because what he was bringing, this new kingdom, it needed new dirt, new seed, new everything. What he was trying to do was to get people to hear this.

What we're going to be looking at in this series is this tension of hearing from God. Why is it that I can't hear from God? Or maybe this past year you got hit pretty hard. One of the things that's standing out to you is the silence of life. Why am I not hearing from God anymore?

Or maybe you show up on Sundays and you look across the room or across the row, and you see people who really hear from God. But you feel like you're living in a desert. What is that?

Well, in this story, in this parable, God's going to share four different conditions of our heart that can either help or hurt us from being able to hear from God. Over these next few weeks you'll find yourself in one of the soils. Your heart will find itself there.

But please do not hear it as a death sentence. It was never meant to be that. It was meant to be a moment of awareness so that you could see where you are and you can hear from God.

I love the song we sang last week where it said that, "You make the wasteland bloom." There is no soil, no heart that God cannot reach. So, if you're coming in here, I want you to hear this.

No matter what you came in with, no matter what somebody told you would never grow there, you need to know there is a God who loves you. There is a God who is for you. There is a God who can take what you just see as dirt that nothing can grow on and make something beautiful out of it. Alright?

Hopefully I gave you enough time to get to Luke 8. We're going to start in verse 4. I promise you I'm reading it exactly the way it's coming out. I'm not skipping any parts. You'll understand what I'm saying here in a minute.

But Jesus steps up to tell this parable, the parable of the farmer scattering seed.

*"One day Jesus told a story in the form of a parable to a large crowd that had gathered from many towns to hear him:"*

I want us to like place ourselves here. This is a large crowd. Jesus has been doing somethings for a while now, so there are all kinds of people in this crowd who are following. There are people who really do believe him. There are skeptics. There are people who are neutral. They just saw the crowd and were like, "Ah, I'll see what's going on over here." There are people who are opposed to Jesus.

All of them are here in this moment. They are all gathered around. Jesus steps up. This is the moment. This is the moment where you capitalize on the momentum. This is where you give them the best of the best.

Give us the hits, Jesus. Give us a little bit of the Beatitudes. Throw in some of the golden rule. Turn some water into wine. Do something, Jesus. Get them here.

Think about this. You have just invited your friends and family to hear this guy. You've never heard anything like it before. You've been talking him up over and over again, and now here it is. Jesus steps up to the mic, and look what he says. I'm not lying, here's what he says.

*“A farmer went out to plant his seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it. Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture. Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants. Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!’ When he had said this, he called out, ‘Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.’”*

Good day. And walks off. Imagine being in the crowd and being like, “This is the guy you told us about? This is why we left? I have biscuits and gravy in the oven right now, and you got me here talking to this farmer? What is going on?”

Have you ever shared something, like a movie, that you loved? You almost want to see the reaction to it more than you want to see the movie again? Like, this was mostly my dating relationship with my wife. She watched like three movies growing up. Almost every week I was like, “Hey, we’re going to Blockbuster and getting a movie you haven’t seen.”

And then you sit there. I’d be watching the movie and looking out of the corner of my eye, waiting for the part. Waiting for the part where I laughed until I cried. And then the part would come, and it would be silence. “What is wrong with you? Are you seeing the same thing? Why can’t you hear what I hear?”

But think about all the people who would have been in this crowd. Like we talked about, there were people who believed and didn’t believe. There were people there who were completely opposed to this.

This new kingdom, that wasn’t just like fun talk. That was talks of war. You’re going to bring a new kingdom? There would have been people trying to shut this thing down. They would have sent out informants to follow Jesus and listen to this message.

So, they sent out Goomer and Gomer. They said, “You go follow Jesus. Tell us what he says. If he says anything about that new kingdom, we’re riding on him tonight. He is going to be dead.”

And Goomer and Gomer sit there and they have whatever they take notes on. Jesus stands up, and he’s like, “There was a farmer who scattered some seeds. Some fell on a footpath, some fell on thorns. Peace.”

What do they come back with? They go back to headquarters, the evil headquarters, wherever that is. “What did he say? Is he going to do a new thing?”

“I think he’s going to be a farmer now, to be honest with you. I don’t know.”

Then there would have been people there who just wanted to come because they wanted to see something cool. They just wanted a miracle to happen. They heard God had done some things, and they wanted God to do some things for them. What did they hear? They heard nothing.

But then there would have been a select group of people who wanted to hear. They were desperate to hear. Even when he talks in parables and it doesn’t make any sense, they can’t understand it and they want to so bad. They can’t leave it at that. They can’t just leave it at a story. They go and ask questions.

This is where the disciples were. The followers, the ones who were really close to Jesus, they are with him. They hear this parable, they hear this story. They didn't get it either, but they didn't stop listening. Look at this:

*"Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."*

*"His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He replied, 'You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God. But I use parables to teach the others so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: 'When they look, they won't really see. When they hear, they won't understand.'"*

That's what this parable was about. Can you hear from God? Can you hear the voice of God? Can you hear?

I have things in my life I can't hear. Things that other people can hear, I just can't hear them. Like, some of you know this, but most of the time when I'm not preaching I'm hosting a service. That means I come up in the middle, I do a welcome, celebrate a little bit, and then get to the message, which I love doing.

But there is a part that brings so much anxiety to me. It's because most of the time when I come up here I have to come up at the end of a song. Most of you are like, "I don't see the problem."

Exactly. I can't hear it. I don't know when the song is going to end. My only cue to when the song is ending is when you guys start clapping. I'm like, "Yep, that's the end of it." But I have to be here by the time you start clapping. So, this kind of puts me in quite the pickle.

But some of you are like, "Then how do you get up here at the front of the stage?" I'm going to tell you that. This is back stage stuff. I've been doing this for so long. The team is finally starting to realize, "He really doesn't hear."

Because I've been in so many rehearsals, so many meetings where we're doing a song. The worship team is up here. They are like, "Ryan, your cue is you'll hear us go from that bridge to that final chorus. That's when you'll know you can come up. You'll hear it."

I won't hear it. The only bridge I know is the one that gets me from Indiana to Kentucky. I don't know of another bridge. I won't hear it.

What they did is they eventually gave up on me being able to hear the ending of a song like a normal human. And what they did is they put a light on the top of a stick on the side of the stage. I promise you.

I stand over there and worship. Out of the corner of my eye there is a red light. I know red means stop. Even when I think this is the end of a song, still red. Not time for me to go. And then, someone in the back in production hits a button and that light turns from red to green. I am a trained monkey. I see green, I come up here, "Welcome Traders Point." I can't hear it. I've gotten better over the years, but I really have to focus in to hear it.

What Jesus is saying in this parable, what he is trying to get across, is one of the biggest problems with the human heart, the human condition, is being able to hear God's voice.

Not just hearing what we've always heard, not just hearing the loudest voice in the room, but being able to block out all the noise and to hear from God. That's been tripping us up from the beginning of humanity. To be able hear and know with confidence that it is from God or that it is from the devil.

And being able to hear... We have to be able to hear God because everything is based on that. Look at Romans 10:

*"So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ."*

If we're going to follow after God, we have to be able to hear. Can you hear? Can you hear what God has been saying? Have you ever been able to hear the voice of God? Sometimes it can feel like, "Is it just me? Am I the only one who can't hear from God?"

There is something God wants to do that can only be heard through his voice. There is something that can only be heard when you come to God, not on your own terms, not on looking for a miracle, not on asking what can he do, but to come to God and offer him your heart.

And to say, "God, I want you to reshape this thing. I want you to do what I can't do, God. I want to hear from you even if it's a whisper, even if it's a word. I just want to hear from you."

And in this story, there is something very specific Jesus wants us to hear—in Luke 8. And the disciples, they keep pushing, they keep listening, they keep asking questions. And Jesus says, "I'm going to tell you what this means." Look at this. Lucky for us, he tells us exactly what this parable is:

*"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God's word. The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved."*

It's a word problem. And each week we're going to look at the different conditions of the heart you can find yourself in. This first one, we're just going to look at that first part, that foot path.

And, just because this is where I am in my season of life, we're going to turn it into an old school word problem. Math in elementary school, because my daughter is in third grade and I'm redoing third grade math. I'm not bragging, I'm just saying that's what I'm doing. I'm pretty good at it.

I get a lot of them, I get some of them right. And she checked this one for us. Let's break it down item by item. In this big story that seems really vague, Jesus is going to make it really clear for those who have ears to listen.

Seed = God's word

Dirt = Human heart

The first one he comes across is this farmer who goes out and scatters the seed and some of it falls on a foot path. This foot path represents a soil that has just been crusted over. The seed can't penetrate, the seed can't go down.

What this is, it's the people who have never heard the gospel message. They may have heard the words, but it's never gone down. It's stayed on the surface. They couldn't hear, it fell on deaf ears.

And it says, "When this happens, the evil one, the devil, comes by and he snatches them up before they ever get a chance to go into the soil, before they ever get a chance to go down and bloom."

You see, the devil is in the prevention business. The devil cannot turn down the volume of God. That's above his pay grade. But what he can do is turn up the volume in the world. He can turn up the volume on the content you take in.

He can turn up all the voices that recycle over and over again in your head that tell you who you are, where you're from, what you amount to. As that voice gets louder and louder, you never get a chance to hear from God. To hear the beautiful gospel message Jesus came to bring.

I just want to ask, is that you? Would you say, "That is me. I come, I want to hear, but I haven't been able to hear. I haven't been able to hear in a really long time. What is it? What is wrong with me? Why can't I hear from God?"

I just want to pull out two big camps that I see are there in the times of Jesus, and they're here today. Why? Because I think that's where we have to start. If you can't hear from God, it's not to leave it, "I guess there is nothing to be heard."

But ask why. What's preventing you from hearing God's voice? What is keeping it at bay. I think there are two big camps. The first one is this.

I don't want to know...

And maybe you wouldn't come out and say that. It isn't that blatant. But in your heart, you're thinking, "I really don't want to. Because if there was a God, he hasn't proven to me he is a good God. A good God would bring good things, and a good God would have kept me from all of these bad things. I don't really want to know. If it happens, it happens, but I'm okay if it doesn't."

And maybe you're there too. You're okay if it doesn't. You've built such a good life that the idea of bringing in a builder at this point sounds like a waste of money. You're like, "I already built the thing. I have the family. I have the job. I have the vacations. Why would I want to mess with that? Why would I want to do some foundational work there? To be honest, I don't want that."

You've got to really desire. You've got to really want to hear, because if you don't you won't hear it. That's the first camp. The second camp is this:

I already know...

I already know. And I'll tell you why I think this is possibly the most dangerous soil our hearts can find ourselves in. Because that soil—I already know—lives really well in the church. It's almost like a green house for that type of thinking.

Here's what I mean. I already know. I've got the Jesus thing. Now I'm just going through the motions. I show up on Sunday. I already know how it's going to go. I open my Bible on



Monday, I already know what God is going to say. I already know what he is going to do. I'm not expecting him doing or changing anything.

The problem with that is you can be in such close proximity with God that you can do all the things. You can come to church on Sunday, you can be in a group, you can read your Bible, and you can serve. From the outside world, it looks like you are planted right there.

But what's really happening is it has crusted over. The seed is just on the outside of the soil. It is never going to grow, because you're never open, not just to what God did but what he has for you.

And you're never re-thinking anything. You're never being challenged with anything. You're never curious. The same God you knew 20 years ago is the same God you now know. The same prayers you prayed 20 years ago are still the same prayers you pray now. There is no growth. There is nothing there that has found its way in. You're exposed, but your comfortable.

If you find yourself in one of those camps, either I don't want to know or I already know, I just want to challenge all of us with this. There is a solution. You don't have to stay on the foot path. You don't have to stay crusted over. You don't have to stay the way you've always been. God wants to do something new. And it all begins and ends with this one word:

Listen

Can you hear it? Those with ears hear it and understand. And hear it. You're going to have to listen for it, because it's not going to come in the same way that other kingdoms come. It's not going to come crashing through. It's not going to be overly clear. It's going to be a seed.

It's small. Unless you are looking for it, unless you're waiting for it, you're not going to feel it. You're not going to see it. Unless you are focused on that and that alone. Then you'll have this moment where you get to hear from God.

God wants you to hear. But it's going to be different. We kind of want this over-the-top moment, right? Maybe that's why you can't believe right now. If God was just real, why wouldn't he just do a better job of being God?

Give me a banner. Just put it out there. I'll get my coffee and you'll put, "God is Real," in the clouds. But that's not what God is going to do, because God is different and God wants you to see differently and hear differently. Unless you're listening for it, you won't hear it.

Do you know why so many people come to faith at rock bottom? I think sometimes we get this idea that God finally got tired of them messing with their own stuff. He came through and he demolished everything, took it away from him.

That's not what happens. What happens at rock bottom is everything you planted died—everything you wanted to grow, everything you thought, "If that one will sprout, if that one will grow, then my life will be better."

From the jail cell, the hospital bed, the broken relationship, the bankruptcy, you watched the things you had planted in your heart die in front of you. And things got so quiet that you could finally hear the word of God.

As you were sitting there just looking at a pile of dirt thinking, “There is nothing that can come from this,” there was a very faint voice. And God said, “I’m not done with that. Keep that right there. I’m going to come and do something beautiful there. All the things you were trying to plant to create the paradise you thought you wanted, I’m going to show you if you listen, if you’ll hear it. I can plant something that can’t die.

“I can plant something that the roots will be so deep and so strong, storms can come, hurricane winds, it doesn’t matter. Nothing is going to break these roots. Nothing is going to be able to steal you from me.”

We want this show of power, thinking that will be the thing that will let us hear from God, but it won’t. A show of power, if God did that, we would bow to it. But a show of power would make us nothing more than slaves. God doesn’t want slaves. He wants sons and daughters.

It won’t be this crash that comes through, it will be a seed that drops. And when you begin to see who God really is, that is when things begin to change. And when you begin to hear that, all that he was willing to do, that is when you’re going to hear more and more and more.

But listening is hard. Hearing is hard. Especially in the culture and environment we live it. We wonder why we don’t hear from God. God’s not done talking, he is still speaking. God’s still scattering seed.

What we need to do is to place ourselves in environments to have the type of soil that is receptive to the word of God. And that’s through listening. Over the next few weeks we’ll look at all the things that get in there and kind of cloud it up, and make it hard for us to be able to hear from God. But today, I just want to put a challenge out there to listen.

So much of our lives are to do, to get things done, to get to the next thing. But have time to listen. Are you a good listener? How would you answer that? How would the person next to you answer that? How would your spouse answer that? How would your kids answer that?

If you want to know if you’re a good listener, if you’re able to hear from God, you’ll be able to hear from people because it’s a constant cycle. If you start listening to people, and you start hearing what’s really going on, you’ll want to talk to God more. You’ll need to hear from God more to be able to serve them and love them really, really well. You’ve got to listen. Not just to listen to respond, but listen to learn.

#### Listen to Learn (not to respond)

There’s a big difference. We’re trained our whole lives to listen to respond, to listen so you can have the answer. But what if you were listening just from the fact of being more curious? Listening from the fact of asking more questions? To listen is to love.

Do you know how I know I’m not listening? I’m not asking any questions. I’m making statements. I’m hearing the story, but I’m not really listening. My wife’s telling me about something. “Oh, wow, that’s cool, great.” Quit playing. I’m not listening. I’m just getting through, going through the motions.

If you knew how many mornings I wake up thinking about the other day, “How could I have missed it? When I walked through that front door, how did I not have more questions? How did



I not have more love? How did I not care more about hearing?" I know I'm not listening, and I'm not caring. I'm not in the moment, I'm not present.

This is the simple question, when I come through the door, that the first thing I ask is, "How was your day?" I know if I go to my wife and that's not the first thing I said, that I'm thinking about something else and not present here. I'm not listening to learn from her. And then as she tells me about her day, if I'm not asking any follow-up questions. Something is wrong.

Because my wife is incredible with a lot of things. Telling stories, not one of them. She either gives way too many details or not enough. Her stories are full of holes. So, if I'm going to listen she can go from, "I was at Target," to "I'm in jail." I'm like, "Wait, you were just at Target and shirts were half off and then?" No. I'm just going through the motions if I'm not asking questions.

When my kids are so excited to share something with me, to show me something they think is just the coolest thing, if I just meet it with, "That's cool. I love that." And I have no follow-up questions—there are so many follow-up questions.

"How was your day," and then listen to learn and ask more questions.

When my son comes running up telling me what happened in Minecraft today, there is so much that can happen in Minecraft. I have so many questions. When my daughters come up and they tell me about gymnastics, do I have follow-up questions?

Whenever they come up and tell me about this new floor routine they are working on, do I have a follow-up question? When my son comes and asks me about Minecraft, do I have a follow-up question?

When my daughters come in and tell me about space or Barbies or what they're working on, the bracelets they are making, do I have follow-up questions. When my son comes to me and asks me about Minecraft, do I have a follow-up question?

Am I leaning in? Am I asking questions? Do I care enough to know? That's what I'm saying. Because to have people around you and to not listen to them, for them to exist in your presence but to not hear them or see them, do you know what that is? It's hell to live not being heard, to live not being seen.

And that is the same thing with God. I'm imagining living on that foot path, not thinking God hears you or you can hear from him, that is hell. But you need to know that God sees you, God loves you, that God is the best listener.

God is leaning in, waiting for one of your broken prayers to come up so he can meet you in this moment. To let you know, "I hear it. I'm for you. I'm with you. I'll never leave you. Keep praying, keep talking."

To go through life, not thinking that we already know, or to think there is nothing to be known, but to come into every single day open-handed. To pray with that kind of mindset. Not just pray with a list that you've already created, saying, "God, this is what I need you to do."

But to come to God with open hands. Instead of regurgitating the same prayers over and over again asking for the same things, what would it look like to pray without talking? Some people call it meditation, but to sit and to just put up a Scripture, to phrase a question, make a prayer,

and then to just sit and listen from God. To hear what he has for you, more than what you have for him.

Here's a prayer that could change things up for you this week:

Pray: God, what do you have for me?

Do you see how much more open-ended that is? That if I just pray, "God, can you make Steve fall down the stairs this week at work?" Probably not going to do that one.

"God, can you give me a raise this week?" I haven't seen God too great on ultimatums.

"God, can you do this? God, if you will do this, then I promise I'll do that." And we begin to put God in this box, and then get mad when he doesn't want to live there. But what if we could come to God and say, "God, today is your day. You woke me up. Before you get me out of this bed, I'm declaring it."

Pray: God, what do you want for me?

That's what this relationship is all about. Us following God, that's what it is. I love the way Eugene Peterson said it. He said, "The task is not to get God to do something I think needs done, but to become aware of what God is doing so I can participate in that."

I heard somebody once say that God will either give you what you prayed for, or he will give you what you would have prayed for if you knew all the things he knew. Either way you're going to get it.

Do you have this space, do you have this open heart to believe and to think God's not done with you? There is something you haven't heard yet. To hear it. Can you hear it? And here is just another thing to put in the context of the conversation this week as you go.

Do you have a time and a place to have this conversation with God?

You probably have a time and a place for most things. A time and place when work starts, a time and a place for lunch, a time and a place, all of that. Do you have a time and a place to hear from God? He will not compete with traffic. He will not compete with these noises. But what he will offer is an invitation to come close.

You see this in Jesus all the time. He does all these amazing things. He's working like crazy doing ministry, serving God. But then he always sneaks away to these lonely places, to these quiet places, and then he hears.

"I'm not here to do what I want to do. It's not about me. I just want to do what the Father wants me to do." Do you have that? Do you have a time and a place to hear from God?

I hear people talking all the time like, "I really hear from God when I go on vacation." Well, I'm sure that's true, but I don't think God lives in Florida. I think what happened was you got away from the noise, you got away from all those things you were hearing. And you had this moment, and it probably wasn't that long, maybe a day or two, but you started to see things differently because you were hearing things differently.

Do you have a time and a place? I'll tell you. One of the best times and the best places is the first thing. The thing you hear first sets the tone for the rest of the day. And if the first thing you hear is something somebody crazy said on Facebook, you're taking that with you all

throughout the day. If they upset you, if they bothered you, that's the thought that's running in the back of your mind.

But what if you opened God's word and said, "God, what do you have for me?" and you read and you said, "I am God's masterpiece." Huh. That's a different thing I hear. What if I heard about God's love, grace, and mercy? What if I heard about his wants and his desires and I thought, "I want that."

Imagine how you begin to hear things. You know you can hear things that aren't really there? A lot of times we hear it in the negative sense, right? Hypothetically, you and your spouse are not seeing eye-to-eye, you're a little off.

You hear the worst. You hear the tone. You can just come through the house, you're trying to talk through text, and it's gone horribly all day. You come home, you walk through the doors, she's cooking dinner. You're like, "Hey, how is it going? What's up?"

"Oh, not much. Just making dinner."

"I'm sorry I was at work. I would have helped with dinner."

Nobody said anything to you. Nobody is worried about you messing up dinner. But you heard what you wanted to hear. You wanted a fight, so you found a fight.

There are things you can hear only if you really want to hear them, only if you are focused on hearing them and pushing everything else out. Then you get to hear what God has for you. And it's such a beautiful sound. There is nothing like it.

And I just want to put it out there for anyone who is here today, anyone watching online, anyone at the campuses who would find yourself on this foot path, you would find yourself in this place.

It's not from a lack of trying. You come every single Sunday, you're in the group. But nothing has taken root. And you're wondering, "When am I going to hear from God. I just want to ask."

Maybe what you're waiting on hearing is not going to come. It's not because there is something wrong with you. It's not because God doesn't exist. But what if God has something better he wants to share with you, but you can't hear it because you're not looking for it.

What if you're wrong? What if you don't have all the answers? What if there is something more to know. What if?

What if following Jesus is more about getting God than getting away from the devil? Maybe that's what you heard your whole life. You needed church. You needed religion so that you could keep running from the devil, because he was fast. And the moment you stopped, he was going to eat you up. And so, you ran and ran until you got so tired you can't even see or think straight. You can't hear anything.

But what if you heard a different message? What if you heard this whole Jesus thing is not about running from anyone or anything. That you're standing on the victory of God. That the devil runs from you. You've got nothing to be afraid of. That's a different message to hear. And that's a different mindset to live with.

But can you hear it? What if following after God isn't so much about getting to heaven one day? We're just on our way there, and one day this thing will pay off?

But what if the message Jesus came to bring was about a different kind of kingdom? What if it wasn't about us coming from here to there, but what if it was heaven invading earth? Heaven with a takeover? Heaven on a rescue mission to find you? Do you see how you begin to find God and to hear God differently?

What if life isn't about you tip-toeing on eggshells trying to get your way to the end of this thing? What if you could walk in confidence? What if this whole thing was not to get you polished up, so one day you'll be worthy of love?

But what if, how wild this sounds, it could be true? What if God isn't as worried about you getting to a mansion in heaven as he is coming and living in your heart? That God is not waiting on you to get to him? God is coming here to do something new within you. What if?

What if you're moments away from hearing something that will completely change your life? Have you heard? Have you seen these videos of people who go through their whole lives and they can't hear anything? And then they sit down in a moment and put one of those devices in their ears. And then it's just like a switch flips.

They can hear themselves laughing. They hear themselves crying. They hear their loved ones. And it's such a beautiful moment. They are just bawling at sound, by being able to hear. Because they couldn't hear anything before.

Do you know what that looks like to me? It looks exactly like when people get baptized. It looks exactly like when this moment comes and you've been sitting there for years, and hearing this message.

And you thought you knew it, or you thought you didn't need to know it. And then in a moment you see who this God is. And everything changes. And you hear this message that you heard 1,000 times, and in this crazy way you hear it for the first time. But it's like you always knew it was true.

And then, by that voice you begin to hear everything else in life. And all you want to do is hear from him again, be with him for a little bit longer. And to hear something new. To grow a little bit closer to him. Just to be in his presence.

And when you begin to see him and hear him, it is a snowball effect that just keeps growing and growing and growing. And God begins to plant something that grows and grows and grows, and it's everything.

It's reading your Bible with a desire to want to know something new. You're not just looking for the parts you've already highlighted. "God, show me something brand new. God, let it hit me in a way it's never hit me before."

And you'll see it come to life. You'll hear things you couldn't hear before. Like, with this parable, maybe all you've heard so far is a farmer with some seed throwing stuff in places he shouldn't be throwing stuff. Who plants seeds on a walking path? Who plants seeds in rocks?

You didn't hear that he planted seeds everywhere. There was not spot he didn't throw them. He covered the whole ground, everything. And when you really begin to hear what this is, and

you begin to dwell on it and just ask God, “God, show me what this is,” how powerful it is and the illustration becomes so, so clear.

Because the seed was what? The word of God. And if we look to John he says, “The Word of God was God. And the Word of God was there and all things were created through it, and for it, and by it.” But then he goes on to say something else.

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...”* John 1:14 (ESV)

The seed, the Word of God, became human and dwelt among us. That God is the farmer. And more than that, he’s not just the farmer, he’s the Father. And the seed is not just any seed, it’s his seed. It’s his Son.

And then you begin to see that this farmer is not just throwing out seed, he’s offering his Son as a sacrifice, that God would love you so much that he would leave heaven, come here, and bring his Kingdom with him to start something brand new, something we could never do on our own.

To take the penalty, to take the sin, to take all of it and nail it to a cross. And to die for you and me. That when you begin to see that this isn’t a farmer, it’s a Father. And it’s not just a seed, it’s The Seed. And you begin to see this picture of a helpless devil who watched this whole thing thinking he was winning.

Think about that. The devil saw Jesus, played a big part in getting him on the cross, saw him murdered, saw him thrown into a grave. And he thought he buried him. He didn’t know God had planted him. He didn’t know God was going to bring a harvest out of this. He thought he was plucking him out.

But God was saying, “I’m not done yet. By this one death all will have life. This seed will scatter, and it won’t stop scattering. For those who hear, you won’t be able to un-hear. This is life-changing.”

I just want to ask, “Do you hear it?” Can you hear it? Can you begin to see it? And it’s okay if it doesn’t happen right away. Continue seeking. Continue knocking. “For those who knock, the door will be opened.”

And in a moment, it will come. In a moment, it will seem like you’ve lived your whole life deaf and blind to what things really were. And then in a moment, all the color comes in. And the sound comes in. And the love comes in. And the grace comes in. And the mercy comes in.

And you get to this spot where you know, “This is not me. God loves me so much, “I just want to be with you. I just want to spend a little time with you. Whatever happens is great. Life is a short blink of an eye, a vapor. But what I’m going to do now is what I’m going to do from now into all of eternity. I’m going to be with you.”

I just want to ask you all to stand with us in this moment, everyone in the room, everyone watching online, to stand. And we’re going to sing. Sing it, hear it, and believe it and know it is true. That it is that good. That our God is for us. That God can do something in this moment that you didn’t think could ever be done. And that this is just the beginning. Come back in the weeks to come to hear more about how you can hear more from God.

Would you pray with me?

God, we thank you so much for today. God, we thank you for shedding light on a story. God, we thank you for giving insight to who you are. That it is by you, Jesus, that we know more about our Father. That no one has seen God, but if we see you and we know you and we know your teachings, we hear your word, and we hear your heart. Let that be the only thing we want to hear.

God, we pray right now, we're going to turn up the volume in this room and shout at the top of our lungs, because we just want to be with you. We want to dance with you, and we want to stand with you.

And God, we believe in this moment new things can happen. God, we believe in this moment we can hear things we desperately need to hear. Because, what if? What if the things you've longed to hear can be heard? What if there is a good God? What if he does love you? What if he does have a word for you

What if what you're dying to hear—that you are loved, that you are wanted, that you are accepted, that you are forgiven all comes from Jesus. Hear it in this moment.

And God, we don't want to let go of it. God, help us to have that mindset as we go from here. God, what do you have for us? Let us just be with you. Jesus, we love you. It's in your perfect name we pray. Amen.