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I just want to right now welcome our Traders Point family across all of our physical locations, those of you joining us online. We're glad to have you with us. You know, over the past several weeks it's really been encouraging to me just to see this room filling up. I know our other campuses are beginning to fill up as well. And to see more and more people come back in person.

There are some people who I've never met. It's almost like we've got a brand-new church in some ways because many people joined us online during the pandemic and now that things are opening back up, they've come for the very first time.

Others I haven't seen in over a year. And it's kind of like a reunion. The most common thing I hear all the time is, "I didn't realize how much I missed it. I didn't realize how much I missed being in person with other people worshipping."

So, I am so thankful for the technology we have that connects us regardless of where you're tuning in from. But if you live in the Indy area, I just want to invite you come on back and experience it yourself. There is nothing like being in the room with other people.

We are in, if you're just now joining us, week three of a four part series of messages. What we're doing is taking our time to unpack one story that Jesus told about dirt. It's found in three of the four gospels. We're looking in particular at the one recorded in Luke 8. Jesus tells the story oftentimes referred to as the parable of the sower, or the parable of the seeds.

As I was studying for this message I was reading one commentator and I love how he described this parable. He said, "The parable of the sower is the mother of all parables." And then he goes on to say the reason why is Jesus uses it to explain why He often taught in parables.

And, Jesus' favorite method of teaching was story-telling. He knew He could give out plenty of propositional truth statements about the Kingdom of God and how that manifests itself into our lives. He certainly did that on occasion. And there is nothing wrong with propositional truth statements. They have their time and their place. They are vitally important.

But Jesus knew a propositional truth statement is likely not going to make it out of your head and to your heart, and into your life, until it gets embedded in a story. So, Jesus would use stories to help us understand the Kingdom of God and what God was doing in our lives.

He would tell stories about lost coins, sheep, and sons. He would tell stories about a treasure buried in a field. He would tell stories about a foolish builder, who builds his house on sand, and a wise builder who builds his house on a rock.

And in Luke 8, Jesus tells a story about dirt to help us understand the way in which the seed of God's Word grows in our lives, and maybe even more importantly, why it sometimes doesn't.

But I kind of feel like I need to clear something up from last week. Last week in between services a very kind lady came up to me and told me she is a soil scientist. And I've got to tell you, that is terrifying. I should have talked to her ahead of time.

But she was very, very kind. She came up and said, "I'm a soil scientist." I said, "What did I get wrong?" She said, "Oh now, you got most of it right." But she said, "I do wish you would have used the word soil more than dirt."

And you know what? She is completely right. There is a big difference between dirt and soil. Soil is where things grow, but dirt is what you get on you while you're working in the soil. Dirt is dead, soil is alive. Dirt is made up of sand, silt, and clay. It doesn't have any of the nutrients, minerals, or living organisms that bring about growth like soil does.

It's just that the word soil didn't look as good on a graphic. So, we went with dirt. But I just want to clarify, she is 100 percent right. And I think there are a lot of connections to our own lives and way we grow. Because, you see, beneath the surface of the soil, that's where things grow.

The challenge is you can't see the growth. You can only see above the soil, where it's dirty and messy, a lot like our lives. Life is messy, complicated, and painful. Anyone with any experience in life whatsoever will usually tell you that it's in the painful moments of life where the most potential for growth can happen.

Personal and spiritual growth most often takes place in the fertile valleys, not the mountaintops. In fact, your potential for growth is connected to your threshold for endurance and pain.

A seed isn't a living thing, but if a seed could talk to us it would probably be like, "No." It didn't want to go into the dirt. It doesn't want to be buried. It's claustrophobic. It feels like it's being closed in on. And if a seed could talk to us, it would probably say, "This is painful. It's dark. I'm coming apart. It feels like I'm being destructed." But there is new life and new growth that is coming out of what appears to be the seed's destruction.

In the same way, growth is a painful process, speaking from both observation and experience. Listen, you're not going to grow without pain. So, if you're always opting out of pain, you're not going to grow. In fact, could I give you today's message in a sentence?

Before God does something through you He'll do something in you.

And I think all of us want to have God do something through us. All of us want to know, and maybe it's phrased this way if you grew up in church, "What is God's will for my life?"

Others of us were kind of like, "What should I do next? Should I marry this person? Take that job? Should I make this decision?" We've always got all these decisions in front of us.

This year has been so disorientating as far as it goes, around decision making. I think all of us want our lives to count for something. We want God to use us. We want him to work through us.

That's not a bad thing at all. God's Word is very, very clear. He has a plan and a purpose for your life, whoever you are. Here is the thing. He'll do something in you before He does

something through you. And it's that growth process that can be so painful. Your potential for growth is connected to your threshold for pain.

Now listen, I wish that wasn't the case, but unfortunately it is. As we come back to this parable today, specifically as I hone in on verse 14, that is part of the point Jesus is trying to make with this story. He is trying to encourage those of us who there's been some growth happening beneath the surface of the soil.

We're going to see there's even a breakthrough through the soil. But there are going to be some things on top of the soil that are going to threaten that growth God wants to do in and through us.

So, just to recap where we've already been over the last couple of weeks if you've missed it: God's Word, or the content of God's Word, is the seed. And our hearts are the soil. The seed is going to do what it's going to do. It is consistent and reliable, but my heart isn't. And the condition of my heart, it can be hardened, it can be rocky. And we're going to see today that there can be thorns or weeds that threaten the work God wants to do in us and through us.

And so, I want to come back to the parable today and just read a portion of it again specifically focusing in on verse 14. Let's look at the story again starting in verse 4:

*"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: '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.'"*

Now skip down to verse 11:

*"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. The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation."*

And this is what I want to focus on today. *"The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity."*

And growing into maturity is another way of saying this. Maturity is God wanting to do some things through you, God wanting to use your life and your personality, your circumstances to make a difference in this world. That's what our maturity should produce.

He says here that the difference between the seed in verse 14 and the seed that fell on the foot path or the rocks, this particular seed, it got a chance to take root. Something began to happen beneath the surface of the soil.

And you see, that's the whole purpose of planting seeds in the soil so that something will grow from it. You don't bury and seed in the soil and say, "X marks the spot. We'll dig it up later." No,

the next time you expect to see the seed it's going to be completely transformed as some sort of a harvest or some sort of a plant. That's the whole purpose.

In fact, next week as we wrap up the series, we'll see that through that one seed a harvest can come that is multiplied by 30, 60, even 100 times. Exponential harvest. Here's the deal. That process takes time.

And that's oftentimes what can hold us back or set us back. Speaking for myself, I'm just a results-oriented kind of person. Like, I want to achieve, produce, and accomplish.

Listen, that is not a bad thing. It's just not necessarily conducive to growth. You see, personal and spiritual growth usually doesn't happen quickly or on our timetable. We want it to. We want to see results immediately or we're like, "What good is this?"

It's like, if I'm going to withhold myself from eating the donut, I'd better lose five pounds like right now. If I'm going to get up and go to the gym early in the morning, I'd better see the six-pack abs coming in by Friday, or I don't know if I have any more use for this.

But that's just not how personal and spiritual growth work. In fact, it's not up and to the right. It's usually a few steps forward and a few steps back. God is trying to do something in us before He does something through us.

And in the soil the seed is supposed to grow. It's going to grow. You've got to trust that it will if you planted, fertilized, watered, and weeded it. It will grow. But it's going to take some time.

While we are waiting for that spiritual growth to happen, it just feels like there is nothing going on beneath the surface, just a lot of waiting. And you're wondering if there are going to be any results.

Here is what I'm just wondering today. If there are any of you living your life right now and staring at the dirt of your life going, "Where is the growth? I've been trusting in God's promises in this certain area of my life, but I don't see any results just yet. I don't see anything green coming up through the dirt."

Especially in the last year we've had with all of the circumstances with the pandemic, social unrest, and everything we've seen. And here's just the word, and I wonder if somebody feels like this today, you just sort of feel buried. Buried with all the circumstances of life, waiting for God to do a new thing.

There is a lot of pain and a lot of pressure. Maybe you're exhausted and maybe you're feeling like just tapping out or giving up. And I just want to loan you some courage today. You see, here is an important principle when it comes to spiritual growth:

God wants to take what happens to you to accomplish His work in you so He can fulfill His purpose through you.

This is the equation in which God most often works. And you can't rush it. You see, we often want to harvest without having to plant or cultivate the seed. Because what happens in the ground, that's not very exciting and it may not seem like anything is happening.

In other words, we want God to work through us without necessarily taking the time for Him to work in us. And we're looking for the easiest results. We're looking for a shortcut to spiritual growth.

There is a technical term for this nowadays. You've probably heard it. It's called the life hack. We're always looking for life hacks, the easiest, most efficient way to get something done. A shortcut to try to manage our time.

I did a little bit of research this last week on life hacks. This is what I found. This one right here. If you don't have a TV monitor on the plane, just put your phone in a zip lock. That's a life hack. You can just have a little bit of entertainment right in front of you.

Another life hack was never fly low again. If you have a problem with your zipper coming down, just get a little key ring and fasten it up. That's a life hack. You're welcome.

Maybe this one right here. You don't have time to eat ice cream and Nutella. Just put it all together. That's going to save you some time. Those are silly, but I think oftentimes I think that's what we're looking for.

"Tell me what book I need to read. Tell me what class I need to take. Tell me what I need to do so I can take the shortest path possible to my growth potential. I just want to get to the place where I know what God wants me to do."

You just can't microwave that process. I wish you could, but you can't. It's more like a crock pot. God's just got to marinate some stuff in you. And I don't know, I wish I could tell you that's not the way things go, but it just is. And oftentimes we are looking for a more fun, more efficient way to get the results we want.

I was kind of reminded of this last week. I was on my way to the office and I swung through Starbucks like I often do. I went through Starbucks and ordered my usually drink, nothing too exciting, just a Grande dark roast. And the lady on the other side of the drive thru monitor said, "If you can tell us what year the Queen 2 album came out, you'll get your coffee for free today."

I was like, "What?" Am I being punked right now. I made a guess, and it was wrong. She said, "Second guess." It was wrong. I apparently don't know my Queen albums.

I guess she felt bad for me. She said, "If you can sing any Queen song, you'll get your coffee free today." So, I kind of mentally flipped through the catalog. The first song that came to mind was *We Will Rock You*.

And so, I sang *We Will Rock You* into the monitor at Starbucks. So, I said that. I'm guessing she tried to get a few people to do that, and they wouldn't do it. So, she cheered and said, "Come around and get your free coffee."

So, I cued up *We Will Rock You* on Spotify. I had it cranking on my truck when I pulled up. They all were laughing on the inside. They came over and gave me my coffee.

I said, "You know what? That was the most pleasant experience at Starbucks that I've had in a long time." We had a great start to the day. I'm like, "That's way better than paying you money for my coffee."

I just wish spiritual break throughs would happen that way. That is was fun, easy, efficient, and yet we're just looking for spiritual growth life hacks. I want God to use me in a significant way. Can you just give me the most fun, interesting, and entertaining route? The fastest route? And I want Him to do it now.

The reality is what happens to the seed in the ground takes time, and I wish that it didn't. My guess is that farming would be much more popular if the harvest was instant and free of resistance. And I'm guessing there would be more Christ followers if the same applied.

You see, if farmers could plant a seed and reap an instant harvest, there would be a whole lot more people in the farming business. But the harvest takes some time.

I think many of us... Maybe you gave your life to Christ on Easter and you got baptized. And the last three weeks have been brutal.

Maybe you gave your life to Jesus and you thought your marriage would get better. It got worse.

And you started to follow Jesus, and you thought maybe you would experience some financial freedoms, but you actually got hit with some unexpected bills.

Maybe your emotional health hasn't gotten any better. Maybe it's gotten worse.

You're left sort of scratching your head. You're looking at the soil and you're like, "God, are you going to do anything new? It doesn't seem like you're doing anything new." And it's easy for you to wave the flag and say, "Maybe this isn't what it's all cracked up to be."

And we just want to microwave the spiritual growth. I'm just wondering if any of you are staring at the ground right now, and nothing seems to be happening. And you want to give up.

And I just want to encourage you today that what happens in the soil, underneath the soil, in the part that you can't see, it takes some time. But God has given a promise. You just stay faithful, and He'll eventually yield a harvest of some kind.

Here is the thing. Jesus mentions this third type of soil. The initial seed falls on the foot path, and doesn't even get in the soil. The second type of seed gets into the ground, but there are rocks just underneath the surface, so it doesn't even get rooted.

But this third seed, we start to see some results. There is some greenery that eventually pops up through the surface of the soil. But there are some external factors that threaten to choke out the work that God wants to do in you.

Jesus uses the analogy of thorns. You could even say weeds. They really both apply equally. And the picture is that the seed gets sown, and God begins to do a work in us but there are some external things that begin to choke out or threaten the work God wants to do.

Jesus just mentions three very specific things, and I think these are so applicable. Here is one form of a thorn or a weed:

The worries of this life

You get focused upon that.

The deceitfulness of wealth

And the third is this:

The pleasures of life

And Jesus gives these three rather broad categories. He says, “Be careful. Just be on guard.” The seed is going to do what it’s going to do. God’s going to produce a harvest. But there are going to be some things that threaten it.

When I think about thorns that threaten the harvest, what comes to my mind immediately is one of these. I don’t know if you’ve ever seen this before. It is a locust tree. It’s an intimidating looking thing.

My first experience with locust trees was when I was in college. I had a short stint working part-time at a farm. It didn’t last long. If I had to do manual labor for a living, our family would starve.

I remember there was one season where there was a bunch of smaller locust trees that had overtaken a field. And they had given me an assignment to clear all the Locust trees out of the field. It was nasty work.

These thorns, I saw thorns off a locust tree puncture a tractor tire. There wasn’t much growth in the field with these things taking over. So, when Jesus talks about thorns that threaten the work God wants to do in you, that’s what I think of.

I also think about weeds. And I said last week that left untended, the soil of our hearts would naturally grow hard. The same thing is true when it comes to landscaping. It’s springtime in the next few weeks. We’re probably all going to get out in our front yards and mulch. We’re going to go to war with the weeds.

Have you ever noticed that you don’t have to plant weeds, they just grow? In fact, they thrive. And it seems like the weeds grow faster than the things you plant. And they are a landscaper’s and a gardener’s nemesis.

You know, no farmer is going to purposefully go out and plant weeds in a cornfield. I don’t even know if you can buy seeds for weeds. Maybe. I don’t know. I’m not sure where you would buy weeds.

I said weeds, not weed. Some of you are like, “I know where you can get that, pastor.”

I mean, no farmer is going to purposefully or intentionally plant weeds in a field where he is hoping to reap a harvest. In fact, good gardeners don’t cause the seed to grow. They just create the conditions for the seed to grow.

So, you weed your garden. And you’re going to have to do it on a repeated basis. The Bible has a word for that—repentance. On a daily basis I am repenting. What is that? Well, I’m just weeding my garden. I’m just removing some of those things that threaten to choke out the work of God in my life that He has already promised He is going to do and accomplish through us.

I think the condition of this third seed really hits home for all of us, because it’s where so many of us live. You see, just as we begin to experience some growth, and we begin to see a little

greenery pop up through the surface of the soil, it's easy to get preoccupied and distracted with the weeds and the thorns that threaten that work.

Really quickly, I'll unpack it. Jesus says one of those is the worries of this life. That is a weed. Most of us know what it's like to fall asleep at night filling our minds with all the worries of this life. And then within minutes of waking up we're on our phones, reading all the news of what happened and went wrong while we were sleeping and everything that's going to go wrong throughout the day. Because of our current pace of life and all this information overload, it's called the age of anxiety. We just can't ever shut our minds off.

So, why does worry choke out the work God wants to accomplish in us? This is the key here:

Worry is consumed with what is happening around us, and leaves little emotional energy to reflect on what is happening in us.

It's always looking at the external circumstances, rather than what God wants to do to us through our circumstances. And when we compulsively check the news or our social media feed, it's just like weeds and thorns that choke out what God is trying to say and what He is trying to produce in us.

Jesus also said the deceitfulness of wealth is like a weed. Money can become a great driver in all of our lives whether we realize it or not. It affects our decisions. It affects our personal peace.

Have you ever noticed that however much money you make never seems to be quite enough? You're always kind of like, "If we just make a little bit more, we can relax, we can rest." Then you finally get to that place, but it doesn't necessarily feel like you can.

That's what the deceitfulness of wealth is. It always promises more than it delivers. It's a great servant, but a horrible master, which is why Jesus tells us to be intentional about where we send it and where we spend it.

He also said that the pleasures of this world are weeds. And the NIV translates that as a desire for other things. What happens is we pursue and chase after these seeds that get planted in the soil. We come to church, and we hear from God, and we weed the garden, and then we go back out and are constantly sowing weeds of pleasure within us. And we wonder why the harvest doesn't come.

And just as we said last week that we need to till the soil of our heart, maybe this week the application is weed your garden. And what are some things you need to remove, and then trust that God will produce the harvest he is going to produce. Because, before God does something through you, he will always do something in you. Always.

And over the last several weeks, I've just felt that message sort of percolating in my own life. It feels like the Holy Spirit keeps reminding me of that, and telling me that.

And you know, I know all of us are tired of hearing about 2020 and the pandemic and everything that has been going on. But it's been such a brutally hard year. I've just seen people's emotional and spiritual health plummet. I've seen marriages crumbling and relationships falling apart because we're all just spiritually and emotionally exhausted.



Maybe the word numb comes to mind. We're all sort of numb. We feel buried by our circumstances. We're wondering if God is going to produce any sort of harvest in our lives again, maybe even in the life of our church.

Oftentimes I think that fear can get in the way of the harvest, what God wants to do. And I just want to cast a little bit of vision for us as a church family. Because there was a time in the middle of 2020 somewhere where things were so disorienting where I thought, "Maybe our best days as a church family are behind us." I didn't know if I'd ever see a room full of people like this again.

I've got to tell you, the last 14 years I've been able to serve with you in this church have been such a ride, and it has been so amazing to see. But, there was like this crisis I went through this past year. How do we do ministry in the future? What does this look like? And I felt buried. It didn't help that I had a number of people reaching out to me saying, "Aaron, do you think Jesus is going to return this year?"

I don't know how many people reached out to me on Easter of 2020, "Do you think Jesus is going to return on Easter?" Honestly, I was like, "I hope not, because I really like the message I'm going to preach that day."

And here's my thing when it comes to the return of Jesus. It should never invoke fear. And oftentimes that's our response to it. And, Jesus told us in as many words. He said, "I don't even know, so you shouldn't spend much time speculating."

Here's what I would say about the end times. We've been in the end times ever since Jesus returned to heaven 2,000 years ago. He said, "Listen, anticipate, don't speculate."

Because when you anticipate, you're looking forward to what He is going to do, the promises He'll fulfill. When you speculate, you take your eyes off what it is God wants to accomplish through you as you wait.

I just want you to know, we are emerging. And I feel as if God is beginning to stir some stuff underneath the soil for our church family. I really do believe that our best days are ahead of us. I believe that what's happening in the world has stirred a lot of people up.

You're actually going to see even more of a divide. I think you're going to see less luke-warmness. You're going to see less half-heartedness. And you're either going to be full on, or totally out.

What I want to do as a church family is draw our eyes toward heaven. I want to tap into that lion in your lungs. And I want us to begin to pray big, big prayers about what God wants to do in and through your life, and what He wants to do through us collectively together to make a big difference for the Kingdom of God here in our city and around the world. I want us to be ready. I don't want us to be asleep at the wheel.

So, I just want you to know, those of you who have been around for a while, we're getting ready to come into the summer months. And every summer between Memorial Day and the Fourth of July I take what's called a study break. Many of you have heard that term.

A break is probably not the best way to describe it, because I'm not necessarily not working. I'm just redirecting what I normally do. Instead of focusing on the message for the next weekend, I'm thinking about a whole year's worth of sermons.

And I'm just asking God for guidance. God, where do you want us to go? Where do you want us to be? What do you want us to hear? What do you want us to do? That's what I'm doing during that timeframe.

But then every seven years, the elders give every pastor on staff what's called a sabbatical. That's a little different. A sabbatical is a spiritual renewal, a disconnection from what you're doing for God so you can get reconnected to God.

And, I know many of you are like, "I'd like a sabbatical," and I'd encourage you to take one in whatever context that looks like for you. I want to tell you this. The reason why this is important, and I don't say this to make you feel sorry for any pastors on staff, because there are so many blessings that come with it.

But I will say that there are very few jobs in the world that are connected to your spiritual health. So, whatever you do for a living, if you're spiritually hurting, you likely can compartmentalize that and go do your job.

But if you're struggling as a pastor spiritually, that is hard. And if you're not honest, you'll just fake it. You fake it long enough, you'll burn out. And that's how people get hurt.

The elders, very wisely have said, "Every seven years, you just take a sabbatical. We don't want you getting your self-worth from what you do and your gifts. You just get away with the Lord."

That's what I plan on doing this summer. And it comes at a good time. Actually, we decided this about 18 months ago. I was supposed to be up for sabbatical summer of 2022, but about 18 months ago, before the pandemic hit, they said, "Hey, your son is going to graduate high school in 2021. Why don't you guys take your sabbatical then—spend time as a family together?" And that's what I plan on doing this summer.

I just want you to know in June I'm going away with my family. It's been a tough year in a lot of ways. We're just going to reconnect with each other. In July, I'm going to the mountains. And I'm just going to get away and say, "Okay God, wow, what a year. What do you want to do through us next?" And then, in August, we'll be in re-entry, coming back in and figuring out where we're heading as a church.

I share all that with you because I didn't want to tell you at the end of May, right before I leave. I just want you to know ahead of time. And I want to ask you to pray for me during those times, that I can just hear from God and be renewed and operating out of a place of a full tank.

I also want you to know our teaching pastor, Ryan Bramlett, was supposed to go on his sabbatical last summer. And COVID ruined that, just like it did everything. So, Ryan actually is going to be on sabbatical as well this summer.

I just want to tell you good luck! It's going to be open mike Sundays at Traders Point. Some of you are like, "Finally, my chance."

But I want you to know you're going to be in really, really good hands because I've asked some of my favorite preachers and teachers to come and communicate the message to you. You're not going to want to miss a single weekend. They are all incredible and amazing. You'll be hearing from a couple of our own people on staff as well.

But I just want you to know that I genuinely am excited for the future God has for us as a church. I just want to encourage you. Till the soil. Weed your garden. Because Ryan and I are coming back in the fall with our pants on fire. We're going to go, and then we want to take big hills for God in this next season.

And maybe right now you just need to re-invite God back in your life to do the work only He can.

I remember several years ago I was going through a real challenging season in my own life and ministry. I was working really, really hard for God, but I was growing more distant from Him. It's never a good combination. We weren't really getting the results I was hoping for.

And I remember driving home from church, and I was praying. And I was praying angry prayers. I was like, "God, where are you in this? We are working so hard and trying to reach people, but it doesn't feel like we are making any progress."

I don't know if any of you remember in the movie *Jerry McGuire*, where Tom Cruise says to Cuba Gooding, Jr., "Help me to help you." Do you remember that scene? He says, "Help me help you."

And that's what my prayer turned into. "God, I'm trying. Help me help You, God. And I pulled the car over, and I cried, and I just got real with Him. And there was nothing. I didn't hear from God. In fact, I got this sensation that He was laughing at me. Which wasn't fun.

I was like, "Alright," so I went home. And when I got home (my son was just a toddler at the time) Lindsay asked me if I would help rearrange some furniture in the living room, and move a couch from this wall to this other wall.

I'm like, "Okay," and so I'm behind the couch and pushing the couch across the living room. My son tucked in between me and the couch. He put his hands on the couch, and he is like grunting, pushing hard. He wasn't doing a thing.

At one point he looked up at me and said, "Help me out, daddy." And right then I got it. That's why I had the sensation God was laughing. I ain't doing a thing. I'm just trying to be as faithful as I can. Spiritual growth is not in my department. I'm just charged with making sure I'm gardening my soul so that God can do what He promised that He will do.

Look at me. God will do something through you. He will. But first He will do something in you.

Father, we come to you right now. I thank you for this story you told that has so much application for our lives, and is so fresh for us today. I pray that if there are some here right now who just are discouraged, feel like they have been staring at the ground and nothing seems to be happening, that today Your spirit would encourage them to stay faithful, to mind the soil of their heart, to continue to weed the garden, and trust You will do what You promised

You will do. It may not be on our time table. It may not look exactly the way we'd like for it to look. It will be better. We will produce a harvest in our lives.

So, Father, I pray once again as we lift up our voices, as we cry out to You that You would meet us in this place and encourage us by Your Spirit. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.