

are the people to whom we speak the soil, but that even as we spread the truth to others, our own heart is part of the soil!

I know of ministers who have often said that they themselves are often affected by their sermons more than the people to whom they spoke. If the sermon is truly given in the power of the Spirit, we are preaching to ourselves as well as to others. So we are part of the soil, and a very important part of the soil.

We cannot always find out and cannot always make much effect on what will be the nature of the people to whom we give the message whether as individuals or whether in speaking in a meeting, but we can before God affect the way it is received in our own hearts and souls. So we are an important part of the soil. It is important we keep sowing the seed in our own hearts and not merely on those occasions when we have opportunity to sow it in the hearts of others.

We have four different types of soil mentioned here. They all are vital and important for us to think about. Perhaps not so important for us to think about in relation to other people because we can't always tell about the other person. Often the other person will bring forth the fruit unto eternity that we may not be aware of who that particular one is. And often the one that springs up quickly where the soil is shallow, that one we may be very excited about and think it is a fine result when the one that shows less result for a time may be the one that brings forth 30 fold, 60 fold, or a 100 fold. We cannot always tell what the soil will be of others.

The primary purpose there is to give us courage to go forward knowing that there will be that which will bring forth 30, 60 or 100 fold. And knowing that we are not to become terribly discouraged if that which is most prominent in our eyes is the one where the seed is plucked away, or where the seed grows up a little and disappears. We should not be discouraged but should keep on and press forward to do what God wants us to do.

But there is also that aspect of ourselves, and there we can have an effect on the soil. I think God wants us to think of that and of how we can effect that soil in order that we not be in one of the first three classes but in the fourth. I said, In order that we may not be. I should say in order that we may not always be, because every one of us is in every one of the first three at many times.

The first one is where the birds ate up the seed. They snatched it away. He says the evil one comes and takes away the seed. We have to remember that that is a real devil. Many today think of it as an old, outward superstition; the idea of a personal devil.. The number who believe in a personal God, the percentage of our population who believe in a personal God, even the percent who say they are ready to believe in the entire truth of the Word of God, is far more than the number who are ready to say, We believe in the existence of a personal devil.