

## Understanding Jesus

### Mark 4:1-20

*When spiritual truth is sown, even under the very best of conditions, \_\_\_\_\_. This is because people's hearts and minds vary, and hearts and minds are where spiritual seed gets planted.*

**Discussion 1.** Can you recall an occasion when you and a friend or family member sat in the same spiritual experience and had very different “results”? How do you explain the difference? Does this reality encourage you or discourage you? Why?

*Two things are required for a person to be able to understand spiritual truth: (1) the work of the Holy Spirit and (2) a \_\_\_\_\_ that is receptive to understanding. Without these, it all sounds like nonsense.*

**Discussion 2.** If God wanted to make all spiritual truths understandable even by the harshest of skeptics, He certainly could. Why do you think He doesn't? Why do you think God wants there to be a receptive heart in place before making spiritual truth clear?

*While receiving spiritual truth may start with the work of the Spirit and with a receptive heart, it only continues within the context of an ever-deepening \_\_\_\_\_.*

**Discussion 3.** If understanding spiritual truth takes more than just a willing heart, but requires an ongoing, deepening relationship with God, what parts of church life help foster that in your life? How does this reality impact how you “judge” the quality of a church?

*Spiritual growth (and our ability to continue deepening our understanding of spiritual truths) is a little like staying on a bicycle. If I am not \_\_\_\_\_, it is difficult to stay on for long.*

**Discussion 4.** Can you recall a circumstance or a season in your life when the distractions of this world caused you to temporarily stop growing spiritually? How did you start again? Why did you start again?