

## SESSION 5 HANDOUT

### KEY SCRIPTURES (NIV):

Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23

*Then He told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear."*

*<sup>18</sup> "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. <sup>21</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. <sup>22</sup> The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.*

Galatians 5:22-25

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

Matthew 13:31-32

*He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. <sup>32</sup> Though it is the smallest of all seeds,*

*yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”*

Philippians 2:1-15

*Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,<sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,<sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage;<sup>7</sup> rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,<sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose.<sup>14</sup> Do everything without grumbling or arguing,<sup>15</sup> so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky<sup>16</sup> as you hold firmly to the word of life.*

Hebrews 11

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.<sup>2</sup> This is what the ancients were commended for.<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.<sup>4</sup> By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.<sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.<sup>7</sup> By faith Noah, when warned about things*

*not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.*

*<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. <sup>11</sup> And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered Him faithful who had made the promise. <sup>12</sup> And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.*

*<sup>13</sup> All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup> People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. <sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, <sup>18</sup> even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”<sup>19</sup> Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.*

*<sup>20</sup> By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. <sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. <sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones. <sup>23</sup> By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict. <sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. <sup>25</sup> He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw Him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup> By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would*

*not touch the firstborn of Israel. <sup>29</sup> By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. <sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.*

*<sup>31</sup> By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. <sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— <sup>38</sup> the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. <sup>39</sup> These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*

## **DISCOVER MORE**

Consider the Scriptures provided and the key points below to complete the questions:

- We choose how we respond to God's love.
- Even small faith can produce mighty things.
- Faith is how we receive God's love.
- "Good soil" represents faith.

Why is it so important not to let our hard attitudes, disappointments, and anger get in the way of God's message of love and forgiveness?

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What difference does it make in a person's life when God's message takes root, grows, and bears fruit?

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Memorize: Galatians 5:22-24. What fruit would you like to see more of in your life? Why?

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Re-read the stories in Hebrews 11. Is there a particular story that inspires you or gives you hope?

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What do we learn about faith from this Scripture? How would you describe it?

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How are faith and action connected?

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Spend some time alone this week in prayerful reflection. Ask God to show you the places in your life where the “soil” might be like a hard path, or rocky, or infested with weeds. Think also about places or times in your life when the “soil” is receptive and fertile for faith, small as a mustard seed, to take root and grow. Ask God to give you an open mind and heart to respond to the good news of His love and forgiveness so that He can do His good work in you.