Faith and Good Soil?

Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted. Mark 4:8 NLT

Reading through what is known as the parable of the sower, I began to think about the different soils that Jesus describes. The seed sown alongside the path, the seed sown on rocky soil, the seed sowed among the thorns and then of course, the seed sown in the good soil. I thought about my own heart...could there be all four types of soil in my own heart? I had to admit it is true. Especially as a young child, without the understanding I have now not all the seed sown into my life was able to grow and develop. But even, now I can see aspects of different soil types that are in different areas of my own hear as the Holy Spirit works.

By God's grace, I am so grateful that enough seed fell on good soil that I was able to accept Jesus as my Savior, and keep on walking with Him. As a college student, I determined to "take a break" from church and reading my Bible, etc. But the Holy Spirit did not let me alone. In fact, He orchestrated steps in my life that actually brought me into an even greater connection and surrender to Him. My heart breaks for the "rocky" soil people. I think the Kingdom of God suffers some bad raps because of rocky soil people.

Those began with joy, but the seed did not take good root, like it should have and so they walked away having "tested" Christianity, but not really allowing the seed to take root. I asked the Lord, as I was reading this, "Is it possible to help people avoid being "rocky soil" people?" I felt like He said, 'Keep on walking and bearing good fruit. Help those you can deal with the rocks that come up in their lives'.

My husband loved to garden. We had our home in Oregon for ten years. He dug a large garden area and we had abundance of harvest every year. But what I noticed as I helped him at times, each year we had to work the soil. In the winter as the soil froze and thawed, new rocks would rise to the surface and had to be dealt with. I think that we, as believers, need to be careful and deal with any rocks or hard places that storms and difficulties can cause. I really have no control over another's soil, only my own. I know of people who apparently walked with the Lord for years, back away. It is their story to tell, but I wonder if their roots weren't as solid as it seemed. Or perhaps, it wasn't the rocky soil that got them, but the seed sown among the thorns. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. Mark 4:17 NLT By doing life together, I believe we can help each other navigate problems and stand together when persecuted, so maybe we can help keep some from falling away.

The seed that falls into thorny ground is concerning. The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. Mark 4: 18-19. NLT Every believer needs to watch out for the tempter that comes to lure us away from the truth. The worries of this life are many. It is important to help teach every new believer how to walk through struggles and storms. I know us, as teachers and leaders, need to do our best to "instruct others in the way they should go". Show them how to lean on the Lord during difficulties by our own example.

In this parable, Jesus let us know that in reality, not all who hear will bear thirty, sixty or one hundred fruit...but let us strive to keep our soil soft and receptive to the good seeds sown into our hearts. Walking in forgiveness, being tenderhearted toward others, cultivating the fruit of the Spirit and not giving into the works of the flesh will help keep our hearts ready for His seeds. He believes we can do it, so we can.

Father, I thank you for your seeds being sown into our hearts. I ask that you keep teaching us how to keep our soil receptive to these seeds. That we keep our listening ears tuned to your words and your ways. I pray for those I know who have walked away, that you will keep working in their lives to help them turn back. May my example of walking through with you hard things, help others, in Jesus' Name. Amen.