

The Hard Soil  
Change of Heart – Part 1  
May 1-2, 2021  
Dr. Jeffrey Allen Love

**Series Key Verse:** *“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you.*

*I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.”* Ezekiel 36:26 (p.655)

**Matthew 13:1-23**

- Farmer: Jesus
- The Seed: God’s Word
- The Heart: Our Response – the difference in the results is in the soil.

(Jesus) *“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them.”*

Matthew 13:3–4 (p.744)

*“The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don’t understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts.”* Matthew 13:19 (p.744)

- **God Blesses What I Fully Surrender.**

*“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.”*

Ephesians 1:3 (p.895)

*“Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the LORD...”*

Hosea 10:12 (p.685)

**1. Take a heart inventory.**

*“Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God.”* Hebrews 3:12 (p.921)

## 2. Open my heart to His healing.

*"For the hearts of these people are hardened...and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them."* Matthew 13:15 (p.744)

**Next Step:** \_\_\_\_ Today I am surrendering the hardened areas of my heart to Jesus for healing.

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**ONE VOICE**

Discussion/Groups Guide from the Weekend Talk  
From the Weekend Talk of May 1-2, 2021  
*Change of Heart - Part 1: The Hard Soil*

**Life Groups use these questions** to go deeper into what we talked about this weekend. Dig into them so you will be ready for the discussion at your Life Group. If you are not in a Group, find out more at [www.alivechurch.com/groups](http://www.alivechurch.com/groups).

You can also use this guide to discuss the Talk with your family or friends.

### Conversation Starters

- Did your parents/teacher/friends ever teach you lessons by telling you a story? What was the story and what did you learn (the "moral of the story")?
  - Why was the lesson easy to remember?
- Do you do any gardening? How does it feel if you put out the seeds and birds or snails or slugs eat them?
  - And how does it feel when the plants fully mature? Do you get a sense of satisfaction?

### Quick Review

Looking back at your Talk Notes, was there anything you heard in the service that stood out, challenged, or maybe even confused you?

### Discussion Starters from the Weekend Talk

Refer to the Talk Notes and related Bible verses from this Weekend's Talk Notes.

***In his Weekend Talk, Pastor Jeff Love challenged us to know that...***

#### ***God Blesses What I Fully Surrender.***

- What does it mean to "fully surrender?" Can you think of some examples when you had to surrender something?
- **Read Matthew 13:1-23 (p.744).** See especially verses 3, 4, and 19.

- Have you ever heard this parable before?
  - (Worth noting is that this parable appears 3 of the 4 gospels – Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Its repetition emphasizes the importance of the principles found in the story.)
  - Jesus says listen. In the original Greek, the word is *idou*, an imperative verb meaning “to see” or “behold,” which especially calls attention to what follows from it. In other words, “pay very close attention. Your life may depend on it!”
- **Read Ephesians 1:3 (p.895).**
  - Has someone ever given you an amazing gift (i.e. large sum of money, organ transplant, an act of service, a special friendship, thoughtful/sentimental gift) that you will never forget and that truly blessed you? Please share!
    - How did it make you feel? Note: this should be something that was *not* earned.
- **Read Hosea 10:12 (p.685).**
  - Now we bring it back to the agricultural context in parallel with the parable.
    - What does it mean to have a “hard heart?”
    - When has God broken through any hardness in your heart?

**To help us learn to “fully surrender” Jeff challenged us to:**

**1. Take a heart inventory.** (Hebrews 3:12 (p.921))

- What does it mean to take inventory? Have you ever worked or run a business where you had to take inventory? Why was it important to do that?
- To use the word inventory here may seem unusual but let's go back a couple of weeks (the weekend of 2021-0416-17) when we looked at communion.
  - **Read 1 Corinthians 11:28 (Page 877)**
    - If our heart is not right we do not take communion. A hardness in our heart impedes a healthy relationship with God. Therefore we rest/surrender to Christ completely.
    - Also check out Galatians 6:1-5 (Page 893). The word “examine” is the same in Greek as in the 1 Corinthians 11:28 reference.
- Where do you need to examine your heart for His healing?
- Is there some hardness in your heart?

**2. Open my heart to His healing.**

- **Read Matthew 13:15 (p.744).**
  - Remember one of our Alive Church catchphrases: “*Everyone spends eternity somewhere!*”
  - What does Jesus say the consequences are for those whose heart remains hardened?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-16 (p.871).**
  - What stands out in this passage to you?
  - What benefit do we experience by having the Holy Spirit in us?

**Digging Deeper**

**Since this is the last meeting before summer break. Make plans to stay in touch and ask for prayer requests over the summer.**

## Next Step

My Next Step:

\_\_\_\_\_ Today I am surrendering the hardened areas of my heart to Jesus for healing.

- Use the link on the app or go to your Connection Card at [www.alivechurch.com/card](http://www.alivechurch.com/card) to indicate you are taking this Next Step so that we can pray for you.

## What's Ahead

- ***This weekend we continue our series: "Change of Heart."*** What does it take to grow as a follower of Jesus? We must open our hearts, and allow the seed of God's Word to be planted there, and share it with others through discipleship.
- ***Our Life Group Semester wraps up this week.*** Of course, many groups will continue to plan gatherings over the summer. Stay in touch with your Group to see what the plans are.
- ***Have you signed up for our Alive Church Newsletter?***
  - Sign up here: [www.alivechurch.com/newsletter](http://www.alivechurch.com/newsletter)

\* The Life Transformation Bible is the New Living Translation of the Bible, including many useful tools to help you better understand God's Word, including our own Alive Church Life Transformation Discipleship Plan. They are available FREE. Let us know if you'd like to have one. We also have a Kids Edition of the Bible, as well.