

Reflection Questions: ***SCRIPTURE TEXT***

For the message, "The Condition of Your Heart" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on November 17, 2019

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text:

8:1 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, **2** and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; **3** Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: **5** "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. **6** Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. **7** Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. **8** Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When he said this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

9 His disciples asked him what this parable meant. **10** He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand."

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. **12** Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. **13** Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. **14** The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. **15** But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- As the crowds gather, Jesus speaks about the different types of soils / hearts the seed / message of his gospel comes into contact with. How would you describe the goal of Jesus scattering the message of the gospel as a sower scatters seed? What is the harvest Jesus is looking for?
- Do you find Jesus' description of the different reactions to his message helpful? Why or why not? In what ways does it help you make sense of the many different responses people have to Jesus & his message?

- How does this text clarify what God wants to do in my life? How am I living in light of this passage? In what ways do I need to change and grow in order to live in light of Jesus' intentions in sowing the seed of the gospel in my life?

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

- What comes to your mind when you imagine a group of Jesus' followers producing fruit in their lives as they embody this passage in their neighborhoods and workplaces of our city?
- What are some ways we can encourage one another as we seek to have God's word planted more deeply within us?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- How does this text help us to see/ understand the kind of church Jesus needs MHC to be for the sake of his mission to our city?
- What kind of new life / future in Christ is this text calling our city to experience?