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March 22, 2026: **“The Way to Grow”**

Text: Matthew 13:1–23 • Luke 8:11–15

Howdy Church Family,

This Sunday we continue our series ***The Jesus Way*** by looking at one of Jesus’ most familiar — and most revealing — teachings: the Parable of the Sower.

If you’ve ever wondered why some seasons of your life feel spiritually alive and others feel dry... or why two people can hear the same message and walk away with completely different results... Jesus answers that question directly.

Here’s the big idea we’ll explore together:

*Growth happens when we hear and respond to the Word of God.*

The way to grow is the way of not just hearing, but listening.

Jesus doesn’t just tell a story about seeds and soil — He gives us a picture of our hearts. And He invites us to take an honest look at what helps us grow... and what quietly keeps us from growing.

As you prepare for Sunday, would you take a moment to pray a simple prayer? “Father, open my ears. Open my heart. Make me good soil.”

Follow Jesus, Be Changed by Jesus, Commit to the Mission of Jesus,  
Pastor Ed

### **Sermon Notes:**

#### ***WEEK 3 — The Way to Grow***

Matthew 13:1–23 • Luke 8:11–15

Big Idea: Growth happens when we hear and respond to the Word of God. The way to grow is the way of listening — because growth means becoming more like Jesus.

#### **1. Growth Begins With Hearing**

- Same seed. Same sower. Same message.
- Four different results — because of the heart.
- Jesus is the perfect listener; He shows us how to listen and how to be the best follower.

#### **2. Why Jesus Told Parables**

- Parables reveal the condition of the heart.
- Isaiah 6: people close their own eyes long before God confirms their posture.
- Jesus delighted in the Father’s voice — that’s the posture of growth.

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### 3. What Blocks Growth

Isaiah 6 in the NT:

- Matthew 13 — preacher's responsibility
- John 12 — God's responsibility
- Acts 28 — listener's responsibility

*Key insight:* Hearing without responding leads to spiritual deafness.

### 4. The Four Soils (Four Heart Conditions)

- Path — Hardness
- Rocky — Shallowness
- Thorns — Distraction
- Good Soil — Receptive, Responsive, Fruitful

Good soil produces fruit that looks like Jesus. (Disciples becoming Disciple-Makers)

### 5. Keep Your Eyes/Ears Open

- Familiarity can make us numb.
- Jesus never became numb to the Father's voice.
- Growth continues as long as our eyes/ears stay open.

### Reflection Questions

- Which soil describes your heart today?
- What has God been saying that you've been ignoring?
- What needs to be removed — rocks, thorns, distractions?
- What step of obedience can you take today?
- Where do you need to imitate Jesus by saying: "Father, I only want to say what You say. I only want to do what You do."