

Caretakers of the Soil

Matthew 13:1-9 & Matthew 13:18-23 · 3 clips · built from Sunday's sermon

How this runs. Open the slide deck and present it full-screen. The rhythm repeats: **play the clip** → **sit in silence a beat** → **put the on-screen question to the group** → **move on**. Your job isn't to teach — the clip does that. Protect the talking time and make sure everyone gets heard.

FOR YOUR EYES — WHAT THE SERMON WAS ABOUT

Wilson preached on the parable of the sower, resisting a simple one-to-one reading and instead asking what role the church plays in the story. His answer: not sowers, not the seed, but caretakers of the soil — people who till, weed, and tend the conditions around them so that the word of God has somewhere to take root. He was careful not to make faith-sharing about sales tactics or dramatic moments; he kept the bar low and communal, and left the outcome in God's hands.

Open

Welcome people and pray. Then one warm-up, no Bible needed: *“Think of someone in your life who helped create the conditions for you to grow — not necessarily someone who preached at you, but someone who just made space. What did they actually do?”*

Open the Scripture

slide 3

The one slide that's the same every week: the sermon's texts plus three questions that work for a brand-new reader or a lifelong one. Read Matthew 13:1-9 & Matthew 13:18-23 aloud, then sit with:

- What does this Scripture tell us about God?
- What does it tell us about humanity?
- What does it tell us about the relationship between God and humanity?

The clips

~9 min each

SLIDES 4–5

Not Sowers — Caretakers

clip · sermon 40:41

Clip: “The parable of the sower gives us a lot of agency — not to save people, but to be caretakers of the soil”

Ask: If your role isn't to save anyone or even to spread the seed, but to care for the soil around you — what does that actually change about how you think of your responsibility to the people in your life?

- What does 'caring for the soil' look like in a relationship you're already in — not a grand gesture, but something ordinary?
- Is there a part of your own inner soil that you've been neglecting, assuming it would stay good on its own?

Leader note: Some people may feel relieved by this framing — the pressure to 'save' someone is lifted. Others may feel it still asks more than they're comfortable with. Let both reactions breathe. If the group stalls, ask them to think about one specific person rather than people in general.

SLIDES 6–7

Every Encounter a Miracle

clip · sermon 45:28

Clip: “Every encounter with Jesus Christ is a miracle — whether you were on death row or just woke up one day and decided to follow him”

Ask: Wilson says every encounter with Jesus Christ is a miracle — whether it was dramatic or quiet. How do you tend to measure or compare your own story of faith, and what does it do to you when you do that?

- Is there something about the way you came to faith — or are still coming to faith — that you've quietly dismissed as not dramatic enough to be worth sharing?
- What would it mean to treat your own story as genuinely worth offering to someone else?

Leader note: This clip can open up real vulnerability — people who feel their faith story is ordinary or even embarrassing may surface here. Go slowly. Avoid immediately affirming with 'your story matters!' and instead let the question sit with the group. The sermon didn't resolve the tension neatly, so you don't need to either.

Clip: “We can till the soil a little bit, pull a weed, serve with them, not for them — the still small way God enters each of our lives”

Ask: Wilson lists a handful of small things — till the soil a little, pull a weed, serve with someone, pray, invite — and calls these 'the still small way God enters each of our lives.' Which of those feels most natural to you, and which feels most out of reach right now?

- Is there one person in your life you could take one small, concrete step toward this week — not to fix anything, but just to tend the ground a little?
- Wilson makes a point of saying 'serve with them, not for them.' What's the difference, and does that distinction change anything for you?

Leader note: This is the application block — push gently toward something specific and named before you close. If someone shares a person or situation, invite the group to pray for that person by name at the end. If people stay abstract, it's fine to model specificity yourself: 'I'm thinking of someone I could just invite to coffee this week.'

Close

Before you pray together, invite each person to name one small thing — one 'weed to pull' — they're willing to do this week for someone in their life or for their own soul. It doesn't have to be big; Wilson was clear that small is the point. Then pray for one another by name, asking God to tend the soil in each person's life and to give each of you the patience to tend it in others.

“You don't leave church — you are sent. Go care for the soil around you.”