

## Thought for the week – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Magazines and websites often proclaim: 'Take this test to find out which personality type you are'. We may categorise ourselves as either introvert or extrovert, organised or spontaneous, left- or right-brained. We might be asked to assess our team-working style, or our learning style. As a result of this type of thinking, there is a temptation to read this parable and place ourselves into one of the four soil-types. Are we those who don't understand God's message, or those who respond quickly but haven't put down the roots that will sustain our faith? Or are we those who are choked by worries or stress, or perhaps we find ourselves looking at other people and mentally placing *them* into one of the categories.

However, Jesus knows the story of Israel, and we can see from the Old Testament that Israel has been each of these types of soil over its history. God made a covenant promise with Abraham to make his descendants a blessing to the nations. Sometimes the blessings were received and shared but often the people turned their backs on God and were indistinguishable from other nations around them. Rather than providing us with personal labels, Jesus' parable reminds us of God's ongoing provision and gives us a way of examining ourselves as a community.

Are we receiving God's word and bearing fruit? Are we blessing those around us with the good things God has given us? Jesus does not condemn people but invites them to consider what might be stopping them from receiving God's grace and growing as God intends. If one of the soil types rings true for us, there is always an opportunity to change so that we are able to be blessed, and be a blessing to others – as all God's people should be:

- Could we deepen our soil – spending more time with God in prayer and Bible reading, so that we have more resources to deal with life's struggles?
- Do we need to pay attention to the weeds of worry that threaten to choke our faith, disentangling them from our hearts?
- Could we do more to hang on to the things that God is saying to us to prevent them from being taken away or forgotten?

God's seed is constantly being sown in our lives – individually and as a church family. We are not called to label ourselves or condemn others, but to think about how we are receiving what God sows, and how we can make it more productive.