

Connect timeless truths with today's news.

### **THE RIGHT NUTRIENTS FOR THE SOIL**

In a global first, the soil in Northern Ireland's farms is receiving free testing by the government. The massive scheme, developed by Rachel Cassidy, a scientist in the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute in Belfast, is designed to level the playing field for all farmers in Northern Ireland. By making the assessment free, all farmers can receive the comprehensive soil sampling and analysis of their fields, plus detailed erosion maps of their land. The goal is to save farmers money and improve their efficiency, especially against a backdrop of soaring costs for feed, fertilizer, and fuel. The larger goal of the scheme is to protect the environment by reducing the risk of excess fertilizer polluting nearby waterways.

### **THE RIGHT KIND OF SOIL**

Jesus' parable of the soils continues to resonate across the centuries. Nearly everyone can relate to the different kinds of soils: hard-packed, shallow, weedy, or receptive. Though the farmer casts the seed far and wide, dropping good seed on all sorts of soils and hearts, all it takes is a few spots of good soil, with receptive hearts—and the few spots that have truly receptive hearts will produce a tremendous harvest.

1. What is the best government program you've ever heard of?
2. How can we develop a heart of good soil that produces such a plentiful harvest in the Lord?
3. What connection can we make, if any, between this parable and the current exodus of many young people from the church?

### **Additional Resources**

*These videos and materials are for your personal use. If you show videos in class, be sure to have the necessary rights to do so.*

Music Video, Traditional: [“Soon and Very Soon, We Are Going to See the King” by Andrea Crouch](#)

Music Video, Multicultural: [“In This Room” by Geoffrey Golden](#)

Music Video, Contemporary: [“Good Lord” by David Leonard](#)

[Coffman's Commentary on Matthew 13](#)

[Rethink Commentary on the Sower and the Soils](#)

[Working Preacher Commentary on Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23](#)