



TITLE INFORMATION

THE 4 SOILS & THE FRUIT THEY PRODUCE

Jake Ordonez

WestBowPress (126 pp.)

\$12.99 paperback

ISBN: 9798385053858

August 11, 2025

BOOK REVIEW

Ordenez makes a case for the continued relevance of one of Jesus' most famous parables in this religious treatise.

The Parable of the Sower, as told in three separate Gospels in the New Testament, is one of Jesus' best-known teachings. As a farmer scatters seeds, the story goes, they fall on four different types of soil: a path (where they are eaten by birds), on rocky ground (where they grow quickly but lack roots), among thorns (where they take root but struggle to grow), and in good soil (where they grow and bear fruit). The parable, per Ordonez, was not designed to be an esoteric theological puzzle to be unraveled by scholars, but one that aimed to make Jesus' teachings available to everyone, particularly given the centrality of farming to ancient life: "Even those with little education could understand the basic principle," he writes, noting the symbolism, for instance, of thorns representing the temptation of selfish desires that stunted the spiritual growth of Christians. The parable, he argues, remains relevant to Christians today, because it serves as a reminder to ground one's life in spiritually nourishing practices, such as daily prayer; these, in turn, will grow the "fruits of the spirit," which include love, peace, patience, and kindness. This pragmatic approach to applying the Bible to daily life also connects the parable to Jesus' description of God as a vinedresser who prunes unfruitful branches. Although the author doesn't shy away from the idea that Christian believers should avoid sin, he also effectively argues that judgment is left to God (the pruner, per the analogy) and not humans (the seeds and plants). Christians, he asserts clearly, should thus avoid judging others on issues of sexual morality or political affiliation, and instead make sure that they are themselves rooted in good soil. The book's approach, which is rooted in standard evangelical theology, may not resonate with all readers. It ultimately offers a refreshing message, though, in a genre that tends to pit Christians against their culture-war foes.

An approachable, compassionate exploration of one of the Bible's most-cited analogies.