



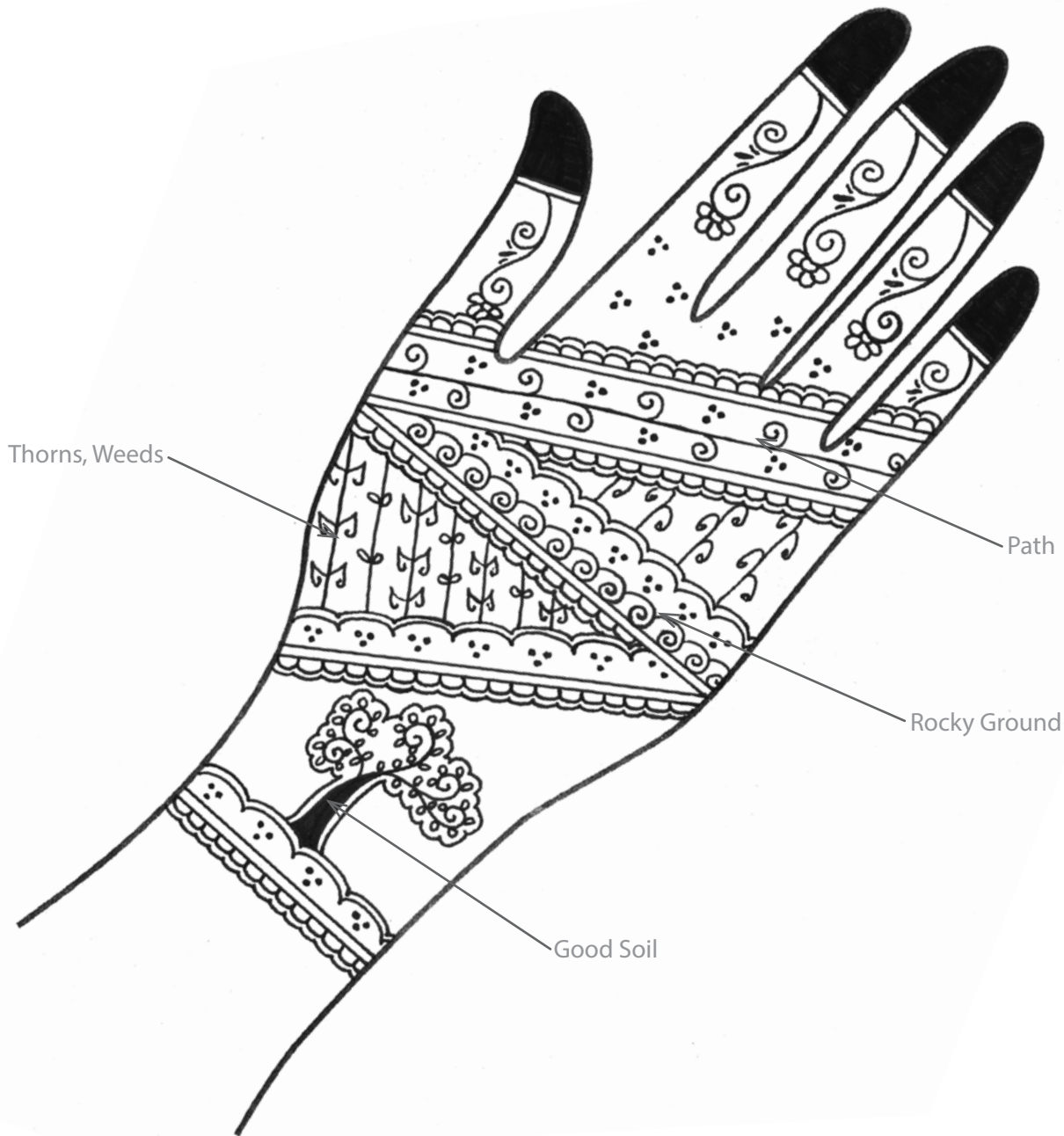
# Four Soils

Mark 4:1-20

Jesus often taught by a lakeshore. One day such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat and went out a little way from the shore so he could teach the people more easily. He taught them by telling them stories, like this one:

“One day a farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a **footpath**, and the birds came and ate it. Some of the seed fell on shallow soil with underlying **rock**. That seed sprouted quickly, but soon it wilted in the hot sun. Since it didn’t have any roots, it died. Some of the seed fell in soil with **thorns**. The thorns grew up with the seed, and when the plants were young the thorns choked them and they didn’t produce grain. But some seed fell on **good soil**, and that seed sprouted and grew and produced fruit—30, 60, 100 times what was planted.” And Jesus said, “If you have ears on your head, listen to what I am saying.” Later, when Jesus’ closest followers were alone with him, they asked him, “What does this story mean?”

Jesus said, “You are allowed to understand the mysteries about God’s kingdom. But if you don’t understand this story, how will you understand anything else? The farmer planted seed by taking God’s message to others. The seed that fell on the hard path is like those who hear God’s message, and Satan snatches it away immediately. The seed that fell on the thin, rocky soil is like those who joyfully hear God’s message, but because they don’t have any roots, they fall away when they are persecuted for believing. The seed that fell on the thorny soil is like those who hear God’s message and begin to grow, but the worries and desire for ‘stuff’ in life choke them out, and they don’t grow to maturity. But the seed that fell on the good soil is like those who hear and receive God’s message and produce a harvest of 30, 60, 100 times what was planted!”



Thorns, Weeds

Path

Rocky Ground

Good Soil

*Four Soils*