

Becoming the Good and Fruitful Soil - Part Three

The Stony Places

Scriptures.

Math 13v3

Mark 4v3

Luke 8v13

Introduction

The Gospel likens our hearts to four different types of soil. We are urged to consider the condition of our heart in the light of the above scriptures. In this article we will look at the seed in the stony places and in following articles we shall consider the remaining types of soil.

In the stony place, the hearer receives the seed of Salvation with joy and there is some initial growth. However they suffer from a lack depth and when trials and tribulations come, they stumble and fall away, with a loss to themselves and the kingdom of heaven.

We need to examine some factors that contribute to a lack of spiritual depth.

The Plough of God

- The stony places have little soil and what soil is present has no depth. This is an indication that the plough of God has not been able to do its work. The Spirit of God has not been allowed to drive deep into this life turning everything over. The plough buries the dross and weeds of our previous life, dealing with incorrect thinking and beliefs. It creates a deep and fertile place for the precious seed of God.
- It's so vital that the Holy Spirit is allowed to bring people to a place of powerful conviction at the beginning of their spiritual life as a prelude to Salvation. If a shallower and easier Gospel is preached the danger is that people will only come into a shallow spiritual place. They show some initial growth but have no spiritual depth and not surprisingly many fall away.
- Like many elements of spiritual life there needs to be a continuation of the work. A farmer who ploughs his field only once, will not have a fruitful field for long. The farmer needs to plough at least once or twice a year to continue the production of good harvests. If its not ploughed for a few years, the field will quickly become an over grown wayside or

a stony place. Some times, we blame the devil for things that disrupt our lives when it may be the Spirit of God wanting to “turn things over” in our lives. The plough of God will bury the dross of any religiousness or self-reliance and make us dependent on Christ.

We say that we have a relationship with the Living God and yet somehow we expect him to remain passive. Why shouldn't he come in to challenge our way of living, thinking and believing? He wants to move us on in our spiritual relationship with Christ. Where God is unable to plough through our lives there will be little harvest.

The Challenge

Jesus Christ deserves the best harvest from us. If we are going on with the Lord Jesus we should expect and welcome the plough of the Holy Spirit driving through our life, turning everything upside down.

False Reassurance

False reassurance can be is a powerful inhibitor to the deepening of our spiritual experience with the Lord. One of the allegations against the Pharisees was that they held other people back from entering into a real spiritual life. There can be a tendency for us to somehow want to “prop up” other people's religious beliefs and assure them they are spiritually all right. When in their hearts they know that the opposite is true.

Christ has so much more for each one of us. The thoughts and convictions that there is more to be done in their hearts is pacified and they are told that their feelings are normal. Their distress is really the Holy Spirit wanting to expose their spiritual state and then move them into a deeper relationship with Jesus. God forbid that our assurances keep people in a shallow place preventing them from having a deeper relationship with Christ.

The Challenge

May we do Christ the honour of believing the highest about the salvation of Christ and his ability to wonderfully change human hearts. Let us not settle for a lesser Gospel and end up having to resort to reassuring people that all is well with their spiritual life when clearly it is not true.

No Roots – No Relationship

The small tender plants in the stony place lacked depth and had no roots. Without roots they had no access to sustenance and were

therefore destined to fail. Spiritually this is a picture of our need of a living relationship with Christ. There is a danger that people can be brought into a set of beliefs rather than a living relationship with Jesus. A set of beliefs may bring some initial enthusiasm but will not sustain us when there are difficulties. The New Testament is very clear that we are to be grafted into Christ who will be the source of all our sustenance and food. (John 15 v1–6)

This is to be a vibrant relationship with Christ, brought about by the powerful conviction and trauma of the spiritual new birth. This relationship will then not only sustain us but also make our lives a full and wonderful harvest to honour Christ. Being very attentive to our relationship with Christ will keep us soft broken soil and continually add depth to our spiritual life.

The Challenge

God deliver us from any shallow religious experiences and ensure that we are grafted into Christ. The evidence will be a vibrant sustaining spiritual relationship with him.

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