

The Rocky Soil (Parable of the Sower--Part 2 of 4) (Subtitle: Temptation, Affliction, Persecution).

Luke 8:4-15 (New American Standard Bible) [v. 4-6, 11-13].

⁴When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: ⁵“The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up. ⁶**Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.**----[Skip to verse 11.]

⁷Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. ⁸Other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great.” As He said these things, He would call out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

⁹His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. ¹⁰And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND.

¹¹“Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God... [Skip to verse 13]

¹²Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved. ¹³**Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away...**[Stop].

¹⁴The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

Introduction

This morning, we will continue our series on the parable of the sower (part 2 of 4): In this parable, Jesus identifies four types of people, depending on their heart condition and how they receive God’s Word: *beside the road*, **the rocky soil**, *among the thorns*, and *the good soil*. Last Sunday, I talked about the first type of people “those beside the road.” Today, we are going to examine the second type of people: “those on the rocky soil” (v. 13).

Content

Recap of the last week: we learned that three parties are actively engaged in our salvation business: God, We, and the devil. First, it is God who offers us eternal salvation through His Word. Without God's Word sown in our hearts, we have no chance to be saved. Next, responding to God's invitation to salvation, our heart accepts His offer. God's Word sown in good and faithful heart will yield eternal life. Thirdly, our enemy, the devil, who wants to steal, kill, and destroy us, relentlessly attempts to thwart our salvation by snatching away God's Word sown in our heart. Snatching away God's Word from our heart is his number one strategy against us.

By the way, today, we are going to identify three more devil's tactics against our salvation: **temptation, affliction, and persecution** (T.A.P.). The devil can tap our eternal lifeline and suck the life out of us through temptation, affliction, and persecution. If we succumb to temptation, affliction, and persecution, and if we fall away from our faith in Christ, we may end up losing our salvation. Let's take a look at them one by one.

Temptation

Look at today's text, especially, v. 6 and 13.

⁶ *Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.* ¹³ *Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and **in time of temptation** fall away.*

Once again *the seed here is the word of God*--ο λογος του θεου (v. 11). The Word of God that is sown in your heart through sermons and daily devotions. Today, we are going to talk about the seed that falls on rocky soil. On the rocky heart condition.

Who are 'those on the rocky soil'? (v. 13). They hear and receive God's Word with joy. They hear the Word of God proclaimed. They also read the Word of God and receive it with gladness. They delight in the opportunity to listen to God's Word by all means. They even keep the Word for a while in their hearts. As soon as the divine Word begins to work in their life, however, their love for God withers away fast. Their enthusiasm over God's Word is temporary. So, when temptation falls on them, they cave in.

E.g. Joseph the son of Jacob was tempted by a woman--boss's wife. So was Samson by a woman--Delilah. The difference. One resisted. The other didn't. Joseph later became the boss of his former boss. Samson lost his life and wasted his call as leader of Israel. Both knew of God. Joseph had a firm root. He walked with God every day in the fear of the Lord. In both good times and bad. Samson didn't. His root was shallow. So, he fell away in time of temptation. Remember, Satan tempts us to derail our salvation train to Heaven.

Another tactic he uses against us is affliction.

Affliction

Aside from the Gospel of Luke, the parable of sower is also recorded in two more Gospels: Matthew and Mark. If you compare Matthew and Mark, you will see a pattern emerge. Luke says “temptation.” Matthew and Mark both say “affliction” and “persecution.” Matthew and Mark repeat the same words, almost verbatim, except the subject in Matthew is plural and in Mark is singular. The words and phrases repeated in both accounts are: *Immediate receiving with joy, no firm root in (them, himself), only temporary, affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediate fall away.* See below the comparison in bold.

²⁰ The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and **immediately receives it with joy**; ²¹ yet he has **no firm root** in himself, but is **only temporary**, and when **affliction or persecution** arises because of the word, immediately he falls away (Matthew 13:20-21).

¹⁶ In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky *places*, who, when they hear the word, **immediately receive it with joy**; ¹⁷ and they have **no firm root** in themselves, but are **only temporary**; then, when **affliction or persecution** arises because of the word, immediately they fall away (Mark 4:16-17).

The devil often brings afflictions in our lives to derail our salvation train from Heaven bound journey. Here, afflictions include both explainable and unexplainable. Some hardships are the consequences of our own doings. There are other hardships that we have nothing to do with. The devil uses them both against us.

The real question is: how do we respond to afflictions in our lives? Do we face them in faith and persevere? Or, do we simply give up and run away? E.g. Have you ever experienced bad things happen to you right after you re-dedicated yourself to God? Business deal turned sour after you wanted to be more faithful to God? Worse, you lost your job? Or, your loved one got sick? Worst, you lost your own health? Please meet Job.

E.g. Job was a man of faith and integrity. Righteous before God. Lost his wealth, his children, and his health. Satan tried to prove to God that Job’s faith in God was purely conditional and circumstantial, that is, Job followed God only because God blessed him and made all things easy for him; his business, his family, his health and so forth. Satan tried to demonstrate that if blessings were taken away from Job, he would surely curse God and die. Job proved him wrong big time.

If your faith in God is conditional and circumstantial, or if your faith is built on the good things from God alone, you will be tested by the devil through affliction. Afflictions will make you either win or lose. Make up your mind how you are going to respond to adversities in life. God commands: Be patient in affliction (Romans 12:12). Do so in faith and trust. Prove the devil wrong.

His next strategy is persecution.

Persecution

Expect persecution: One thing we must realize and remember: persecution is a normal experience for believers. Jesus experienced it. So did the twelve disciples. So did Paul. So did Peter. So did John. So did countless believers in Christ. Many lost their lives. Others were ridiculed in public. More others were imprisoned. All because of their faith in Christ.

Persecution is everywhere. Even today. It was prophesied in the Bible that in the end times, we too will be persecuted because of our faith in Christ.

2 Timothy 3:12: *Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

Jesus calls us blessed when we are persecuted because of Him. In Matthew 5:11, *“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”*

E.g. In my military days, I was persecuted because of my faith in Jesus. That’s normal for you too. How God wants us to respond to persecution? Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12: 21). Do not hate those who persecute you. If you end up hating those who persecute you, you lose. If you pray for them, you win (Matthew 5:44). If you bless and not curse them, you win (Romans 12:14). Persevere. Don’t cave in.

One more comment on this parable, and I will be through. Root.

Root:

*... these (those on the rocky soil) have **no firm root**; (Luke 8:13).*

But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had **no root**, they withered away (Matthew 13:6).

And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had **no root**, it withered away (Mark 4:6).

Root: Root is like a foundation to the house. Without foundation, no house stands. Without root, there’s no fruit. Root brings forth fruit: *“The wicked man desires the booty of evil men, But the **root** of the righteous yields fruit” (Proverbs 12:12).*

Root below, fruit above (Amos 2:9). Root downward fruit upward (Isaiah 37:31).

*“For he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its **roots** by a stream And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a*

year of drought Nor cease to yield fruit” (Jeremiah 17:8).---deep root fears no year of drought or no fruit.

Deep root vs. No root: Fruition vs. Wither away. Do you desire the fruit of the Holy Spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? (Galatians 5:22-23). Be rooted in God’s Word.

Conclusion

Today we have identified our enemy’s three tactics against our salvation: Temptation, affliction, and persecution. When you experience them, don’t be alarmed. They are all part of the Christian experience. None of us are exempt from them. Even Jesus went through. All of them. Remember T.A.P. Our enemy devil uses them all to tap away salvation from us.

We have choice between Fruit or No Fruit. Overcome or succumb. A life fruitful or a life withered.

Let’s overcome life’s trials by going deep in our faith and in the Word of God. Let us deepen our faith in God, let us persevere in trials so that we may bear fruit in our walk with God.

We will continue our series next week.

Amen.