

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

Luke 8:4-15 (New American Standard Bible 1995) [v. 4-6, 11-13].

⁴ When 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.**

⁷ Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. ⁸ Other 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.”

⁹ His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. ¹⁰ And 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...

¹² Those 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....**

¹⁴ The 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. ¹⁵ But 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

Last Sunday, we examined the first soil — Jesus calls ‘**beside the road.**’ It is the hardened heart. In this heart, the Word of God is sown yet it never enters, because the devil snatches it away before faith could form.

This morning, we turn to the second soil — the rocky soil. In this heart, the Word of God enters. It is received with joy. It even begins to grow. But it does not endure.

Let’s hear what Jesus says: “Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.” “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” (Luke 8:6, 13).

Notice carefully: They hear. They receive. They rejoice. They believe — *for a while*. But they have no root. And when pressure comes, they fall away.

This is not about unbelief. This is about shallow belief.

And today we will see how three pressures test shallow faith: **Temptation. Affliction. Persecution.**

All three reveal the same issue — root. Let’s talk about the nature of shallow faith.

I. The Nature of Shallow Faith

In Israel, rocky soil did not mean stones scattered on top. It meant a thin layer of soil with solid rock underneath. The seed sprouts quickly because the ground is warm. Growth looks impressive. But the roots cannot go deep. So, when the sun rises, the plant withers.

Likewise, shallow faith produces quick emotion — but no endurance. This is the person who:

- Loves worship
- Loves inspiration
- Loves spiritual excitement
- Loves the feeling of change

But never develops spiritual depth. As you know, a fast start does not guarantee a strong finish. Think of what I call “The New Hobby Syndrome.”

You know some people who decide they are going to become a world-class cyclist. On Monday, they buy the expensive bike, the outfit, and the gear. They are obsessed for two weeks. By week three, the bike is collecting dust in the garage. They loved the excitement — but not the discipline.

Some people treat the Gospel like a New Year’s resolution. All flare — no fire. All emotion — no endurance. They receive God’s Word with joy. But joy without depth cannot survive pressure. Let’s talk about temptation.

II. Temptation — When Desire Tests the Root

Jesus says, “In time of **temptation** they fall away.” Temptation tests how deep the Word of God has gone into your heart. Consider Joseph the son of Jacob. He was tempted. Consider Samson. He too was tempted. Joseph resisted. Samson did not. What was the difference?

Root. Joseph walked daily in the fear of the Lord. His obedience was not emotional — it was rooted in the fear of the LORD. Samson lived impulsively. His spiritual life was shallow.

Temptation does not create weakness. It reveals weakness. If the Word of God has not gone deep, temptation will pull it out.

So how do we stand in times of temptation? Scripture gives us two anchors: First, 1 Corinthians 10:13: “*God is faithful... with the temptation will provide the way of escape.*” Trust in God and His faithfulness. He keeps His promise. He never allows you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. He will provide the way out with the temptation, too. Next, watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation (Matthew 26:41). Prayer is the surest way to overcome temptation.

Grow your faith deeper through:

- Private prayer
- Daily reading of the Bible
- Joyful surrender
- Faithful obedience in all things

Shallow believers look strong in public. Rooted believers grow strong in private.

III. Affliction — When Hardship Tests Faith

If temptation does not uproot shallow faith, affliction often will. When “*affliction arises because of the Word,*” the shallow faith falls away (Mark 4:17, Matthew 13:21).

Affliction means pressure. Hardship. Distress. Some afflictions are consequences of our own actions. Others are beyond our control. The enemy uses both. Have you ever rededicated yourself to God — and then hardship followed? A business deal collapses. Health declines. A loved one suffers.

The real question is not, “Why is this happening?” The real question is, “How will I respond?”

Please meet Job. Everything was going well for him. One day, Satan dared to God to remove the blessings from Job, and “*he will surely curse You to Your face*” (Job 1:11). Soon, Job lost wealth. He lost children. He lost health. But he didn’t curse God. He endured. He proved the devil wrong. Why? Because his faith was deeper than his circumstances. If your faith is rooted only in blessings, it will collapse under hardship. But if your faith is rooted in God Himself, affliction will deepen you — not destroy you. Affliction does not create shallow faith. It exposes it.

Two things God’s Word commands us to do in time of trouble: “*Be patient in affliction*” (Romans 12:12). *Pray* (James 5:13).

IV. Persecution — When Loyalty Is Tested

Finally, persecution. Jesus said persecution arises “because of the Word” (Mark 4:17, Matthew 13:21). Persecution is not abnormal Christianity. It is normal Christianity. Wherever and whenever God’s Word is proclaimed, there will be persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12 says: “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Jesus was persecuted. The apostles were persecuted. Countless believers have been persecuted. Many of them lost their lives. They were imprisoned and mistreated. In my military days, I was mocked because of my faith in Christ. That is not unusual. It is expected. Jesus said: “*Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you because of Me*” (Matthew 5:11).

The question is not whether persecution will come. The question is: how will you respond? Romans 12:21: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Matthew 5:44: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

If you hate your persecutor, you lose. If you bless them, however, you win. Persecution does not destroy real faith. It reveals whether it is rooted.

V. The Core Issue — Root

All three pressures point to one issue:

Root. Jesus repeats: “They have no firm root.” Root is foundation. Without foundation, no house stands. Without root, no faith will stand, and no fruit.

Jeremiah 17:8 says: “He will be like a tree planted by the water... and will not fear when the heat comes.” Heat does not destroy rooted trees. Root below brings forth fruit above.

Do you want the fruit of the Spirit? *Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-control* (Galatians 5:22-23). Then deepen your root in Christ.

Colossians 2:7 says: “Having been firmly rooted... established in your faith.”

Root grows through:

- Scripture meditation
- Prayer
- Obedience
- Perseverance

Root grows slowly — but it holds firmly.

Conclusion

The rocky soil represents shallow faith. It begins with joy. It grows quickly. It looks promising. But when temptation comes — When affliction comes — When persecution comes — It withers.

You have two outcomes: Rooted — or withered. Fruitful — or temporary.

Temptation will come. Affliction will come. Persecution will come.

The question is not whether pressure will come. The question is: How deep are your roots?

Let the Word of God go deeper than emotion. Let it go deeper than excitement. Let it go deeper than convenience. Deepen your root in Christ. Start with prayer this week. Spend some time with your heavenly Father every day. Lift your hands and give thanks to Him. They will deepen your faith in Christ.

Next week, we will examine the thorny soil — the distracted heart. But today, ask yourself: Is my faith rooted — or merely excited?

Amen.