

Parable of the Sower (1) Wayside and Stony Ground

1- Objective

- ❖ Understand the parable and relate it to our life
- ❖ Seeds devoured on the Wayside
- ❖ The Stony Ground

2- Reference

- ❖ Holy Bible: Matthew 13: 3-22; Mark 4: 3-20; and Luke 8: 5-15
- ❖ Some writings of St. John Chrysostom
- ❖ Sermon by Fr. Abraham Wassef “Bearing fruit in the parable of the sower”
- ❖ Ascending the Heights: A Layman’s Guide to the Ladder of Divine Ascent by Father John Mack.

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21)

4- Lesson Outlines

General principles

- ❖ God sows seed on all types of ground; people can respond in different ways to God’s word; some accept it, and some reject it for various and different reasons.
- ❖ God is not partial to one group over another. All receive the Word of God equally; rich and poor, wise and unwise, strong and weak, saints and sinners. They all have the same opportunity to listen and believe.
- ❖ Despite His foreknowledge of who will and will not accept His Word, He still sows on all the different types of ground because people can change; a plough can till the ground and turn barren ground into fruitful ground.
- ❖ The word of God helps changing “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

What type of ground am I?

- ❖ Don’t think in term of absolutes. It is not necessarily the case that a person is one type of soil or another, but we all exhibit different characteristics of the 4 soils. We are weak in some areas, and strong in others; a single person may harden his heart for a sermon, stand firmly in front of a temptation, but may fall again due to oppression or he may be fruitful with different degrees.

I - Seed that fell on the path

People who are described by this type of ground are:

- ❖ Unbeliever:
 - 1- Those who respond to the word of God with indifference, or even hatred and disgust like atheists that rely solely on the mind; they have no desire to believe and do not acknowledge that they need anything or lack anything.
 - 2- Believers of other faiths who are so entrenched in their belief that their mind is not open to the possibility and promises of God.

Both are blind, not discerning the truth.

- ❖ Believers: Even more sinister than how the devil steals the Word from unbelievers is how he manages to steal it from believers, that acknowledge God and the devil, and yet are equally blind to how their attitudes have been so shaped by the world that they no longer desire holiness.

II - The Stony Ground

- ❖ This reflects a person who has an emotional response to the word of God; someone who upon hearing, responds seemingly appropriately but the response is superficial. The problem is that the faith of this person is only on the surface through the emotions.
- ❖ This lack of maturity is seen in the lack of patience initially with the seed springing up immediately; it germinated on the surface of the earth not down deeper which would have necessitated time to grow the roots deeper into the soil and a longer time for the shoot to surface from the earth (like diet and exercise).
- ❖ The scary thing is that this is the exact type of person our culture produces! How many things are we willing to wait patiently for? Hot water? Coffee? Red light? Traffic? Food? Dry cleaning? If we respond this way in non spiritual things, the chances are much higher that we will respond the same way with spiritual things.
- ❖ When the trials come, what this person needs most is to remember the truth but because he is so trained or accustomed to dealing out of emotion, the same happens here and he is not able to access the truth because he was not disciplined and patient in putting the truth within him “My son, if you come to serve the Lord, prepare your soul for temptation. Set your heart aright and constantly endure and make not haste in time of trouble” (Sirach 2:1-2).
- ❖ The experience of being born as a baby is not a pleasant one, but it is necessary step for life to begin. Overcoming our weakness and softening our hardened hearts is even more painful, but promises a life filled with the Spirit. God’s power is what will soften our hearts but we must ask Him to help us have the desire to change.
- ❖ Patience, persistence, endurance... are the necessary ingredients in transforming a stony heart. We are not stuck where we are but are able to change our soil. One way is to practice persistence in our life and to be disciplined and train ourselves to not be superficial.

5- Conclusion

- ❖ We are never beyond redemption, but God will not force Himself upon us. We must desire to change and be sincere Christians that want the Word of God to be planted in our hearts. While this sounds nice and pleasant, it might mean a lot of sacrifice, tough decisions, and a commitment to give up cherished sins and bad habits that have been with us for decades.
- ❖ Consider each day's effort as but one blow against a mighty oak. The first blow may cause not a tremor in the wood, or the second, or the third. Each blow, of itself, may be trifling, and seem of no consequence. Yet from childish swipes the oak will eventually tumble. So it will be with the efforts of today.
- ❖ It is like the rain drop which washes away the mountain; the ant who devours a tiger; the star which brightens the earth; the slave who builds a pyramid. I will build my castle one brick at a time for I know that small attempts, repeated, will complete any undertaking.

6- Activities / Discussion Pointss

- ❖ Discuss the following verse in the shadow of the parable: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).
 - Humility: I need help.
 - Pray and Seek: Seek the one that has the power to change us, not we ourselves.
 - Repent: Continual process of repenting "For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity" (Proverbs 24: 16).
 - God will hear: He will not turn a deaf ear.
 - Forgive us: Restore us, make us whole, wash us from our sins.
 - Heal our land: Change our nature, make us whole, make us Christ-like.