

June 14, 2020
God's Seed=God's Word

Scripture reading: Matthew 13:1-8 & 19-23

Text: *“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria... Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went” (Acts 8:1&4 NIV).*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus used pictures, metaphors in order to demonstrate the different type of soils that represent the people's hearts, while He identified the seed with the Word of God.

The first soil the Lord talked about was the pathway. Jesus identified the path with those who hear His message, but do not understand it. The seed cannot take root and spring up on the hard road or concrete. It will not be a healthy plant. To those whose hearts are like the pathway the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.

Other seeds fell on rocky places. This is the second type of soil. The plant sprang up quickly, however, when the sun came up, the plants were scorched because they had no root. It referred to those who hear the Word, but since they have no strong roots in Christ, they quickly fall away from Jesus when trouble comes. Their hearts are rock hard, and the Word of God roll down from there.

The third type of soil that Jesus spoke of was the thorny soil. The thorns grow up quickly and they choke out the plant. The weeds consume the water and nutrients that should be used for the plant's nourishment, therefore the good plant dies. These thorns represent the cares of life and the desire for wealth which choke the Word of God out of the lives of many people.

The fourth, and last type of soil that Jesus talked about was the good soil. If you really want to have a spiritually productive life, you can have it. Jesus says, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Mt.5:6)*. If you truly want to live a spiritually productive life then plow the soil and prepare your heart to receive God's Word. Put down roots and persevere through the trials of life, and pull the weeds of worldly wealth and worries, and pursue spiritual riches instead. If you do these things then you will have good soil and the seed of God's Word will produce a bountiful harvest in your life. Jesus said that the harvest would yield *“a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown”*. When you make your life match God's will the results are miraculous.

I would like to share something with you that the Lord showed and taught me during this past couple of months while we did not have in-person worship services. First and foremost I have to admit to you that I don't like online, recorded worship services. I never really wanted to record my services and stream them online. Although these services are wide spread nowadays, but it is a great comfort for me that many of my pastor colleagues

are not so enthusiastic about recording and streaming worship services online either. It is pretty difficult to preach to a camera, since Christianity, Christian faith is lived out in fellowship, and it means much more for me to see you in the pews and feel your presence. By this we are in fellowship with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and fellowship with one another. Therefore, I was eagerly waiting for to end the online services, devotionals and come back to the House of God to worship Him together in-person. However, the Lord can bring the best out of any situation. At the beginning, when we had to cancel all services and events in our church's life, it goes back to March, God spoke to my heart and brought a story to my attention from the Book of Acts chapter 7 and 8, when Stephen was stoned and died the martyr's death. The Word of God says, "*On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria... Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went*" (Acts 8:1&4). It was a very difficult time in the life of the first followers of Christ.

We may also say that the past three months were very difficult and challenging for many of us. Although we were not persecuted for our faith in Christ, thanks be to God, however, this whole pandemic was and still is pretty scary, challenging, and making us feel worried.

What the Lord showed me in the past couple of months was that as the first Christians had to give up their usual and ordinary lives, due to the persecution, they were used by God for a great purpose in the times of great trials and difficulties. The Lord used that time and circumstances to His glory so His Word would spread in Judea and Samaria. The Christians were "forced" by this very unfortunate event of persecution to spread God's Word wherever they went. I also felt that although I have never really wanted to do these online worship services and devotionals, but then Lord kind of "forced" me to do it, so His Word would reach more people's heart through the 21st century technology.

Although at the end I got accustomed to recording the video services, but I am very happy that we are here now and I can share with you, in-person, what God laid onto my heart and taught me. However, just know that I am still not a big fan of those online services, but I know and God convinced me that He can use everything to spread His Word so more and more people would hear about Jesus Christ and grow in faith.

This morning I would like to encourage you to listen to the Lord's voice where He wants to use you to bring blessing and His Word into the lives of others. It may be not easy what He wants, but challenging. However, know it that He can use you to His glory and for the benefit and blessing of many people.

May the Lord Jesus help you to live a productive life and bear much fruit and proclaim the Word of God for His glory. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
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