

Blooming People

Prayer

Once upon a time... LOL

A motivational speaker named Dennis Kimbro said something quite interesting with regards to people. He said:

- Some people are like wheels – They don't work unless they are pushed
- Some people are like trailers – They have to be pulled along.
- Some people are like kites – They are always up in the air
 - ...and if you don't keep a string on them they will fly away
- Some people are like canoes – They have to be paddled
- Some people are like blisters – They don't show up until the work is done
- Some people are like balloons – They are always puffed up and full of themselves
- Some people are like flat tires – They have to be jacked up and changed
- Some people are light lights – They are always switching off and on

I have often added that:

- Some people are like mushrooms – They don't want to own the message but rather want to be kept in the dark and fed manure

So what did Jesus say?

Luke 8:4-14

When a large crowd from several towns had gathered around Jesus, he told them this story: A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. While the farmer was doing it, some of the seeds fell along the road and were stepped on or eaten by birds. Other seeds fell on rocky ground and started growing. But the plants did not have enough water and soon dried up. Some other seeds fell where thorn bushes grew up and choked the plants. The rest of the seeds fell on good ground where they grew and produced a hundred times as many seeds. When Jesus had finished speaking, he said, "If you have ears, pay attention!" (Matthew 13. 10- 17; Mark 4. 10- 12) Jesus 'disciples asked him what the story meant. So he answered: I have explained the secrets about God's kingdom to you, but for others I can only use stories. These people look, but they don't see, and they hear, but they don't understand. (Matthew 13. 18- 23; Mark 4. 13- 20) This is what the story means: The seed is God's message, and the seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear the message. But the devil comes and snatches the message out of their hearts, so that they will not believe and be saved. The seeds that fell on rocky ground are the people who gladly hear the message and accept it. But they don't have deep roots, and they believe only for a little while. As soon as life gets hard, they give up. The seeds that fell among the thorn bushes are also people who hear the message. But they are so eager for riches and pleasures that they never

produce anything. Those seeds that fell on good ground are the people who listen to the message and keep it in good and honest hearts. They last and produce a harvest. (Mark 4:21-25)

Jesus said that people are like soil. In the parable of the sower we see that the focus is not on the sower but on the soil. The soil in that parable is the receiver of the message. In the parable we see that the sower and the seed are constant but the variable factor is the soil. Well if the people are like soil the emphasis is on how we receive the message given to us.

The four types of soil described produce three types of results:

- Some people are like fertile ground but give empty promises
- Some people have false faith and have unfulfilled potential
- Some people are fertile soil and prime candidates

Fertile Ground and Empty Promises

Luke 8:4-5: CEV

When a large crowd from several towns had gathered around Jesus, he told them this story: A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. While the farmer was doing it, some of the seeds fell along the road and were stepped on or eaten by birds

Luke 8:11-12:

This is what the story means: The seed is God's message, and the seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear the message. But the devil comes and snatches the message out of their hearts, so that they will not believe and be saved

You see the seeds that fell on the fertile ground but which were eaten represent those who flock to Jesus, feel good about his good news and feel good about themselves.

In the narrative we see that the crowd was impressed by Jesus and even followed him from town to town, yet Jesus was not impressed with them. Jesus was not impressed with all their attendance, attention and praise because they were coming to him for the wrong reasons. Our relationship with Jesus should not be superficial. If we are not committed to him then our actions avail nothing.

Matt 7:22-24

On the Day of Judgment many will call me their Lord. They will say, "We preached in your name, and in your name we forced out demons and worked many miracles." But I

will tell them, "I will have nothing to do with you! Get out of my sight, you evil people!" (Luke 6. 47- 49) Anyone who hears and obeys these teachings of mine is like a wise person who built a house on solid rock

Here is the problem...

Some people come to church for information. Just as we discussed in Narcotizing Dysfunction, the filling up on information deceives us into thinking we are actually doing something about that which we have become aware.

The Word of God says in James 1:22-25:

Obey God's message! Don't fool yourselves by just listening to it. If you hear the message and don't obey it, you are like people who stare at themselves in a mirror and forget what they look like as soon as they leave. But you must never stop looking at the perfect law that sets you free. God will bless you in everything you do, if you listen and obey, and don't just hear and forget.

If this is you... then you are in house listening - but you are not in fellowship. You are interested, but not inspired. The enemy easily overpowers those who have low aim, little interest and lame excuses in a sense of apathy.

In this state the enemy takes away the word from your heart. The enemy has robbed you of the seed; which was planted. You become a person who is present in body but absent in spirit.

False faith and unfulfilled potential

Luke 8:6

Other seeds fell on rocky ground and started growing. But the plants did not have enough water and soon dried up

Luke 8:13

The seeds that fell on rocky ground are the people who gladly hear the message and accept it. But they don't have deep roots, and they believe only for a little while. As soon as life gets hard, they give up

The seeds that fall upon the rock and thorns are like those who have insincere faith and unfulfilled potential. When tested they are shallow, soft and spineless. They cannot stand the heat, pressure or opposition to their faith and so buckle.

Note that the seeds that fell on the rocky areas (Matt 13:5; Mark 4:5) have no water or root. Without grounding in the scripture where it is written on the tablets of your

heart, there is no insight or depth to hold firm to. This means scripture must not just heard but applied or as the bible says hearkened to.

The word of God is like a river. It flows. In this context there is no moisture and so the seed dies.

When I think of the rocky soil, I see in my spirit all those who have fallen away during a time of trouble and testing. These people have surface exuberance and seem inspired but there is no depth in their faith. It is simple... without the living water and roots the plant falls prey to tribulation, trouble, affliction or persecution.

I once thought this parish to be a wasteland but God corrected me and I now see it as a bed of roses... The presence of God descends on his people and the dew forms on their petals. When the wind of trouble blows that dew falls to the ground and nourishes and nurtures those around us. People are lovely, but... be strong enough not to walk away when you discover that roses have thorns...

You see the lesson of the thorns (Luke 8:7) is that as a Christian you can hear, but still go your own way choked by the worries of this life you can be consumed with the pursuit of money or pleasure and in this way never mature.

Don't be choked by hedonism... the Greek word Hedone means the pursuit of pleasure. Be productive... We are warned against this in Mark 4:19

But they start worrying about the needs of this life. They are fooled by the desire to get rich and to have all kinds of other things. So the message gets choked out, and they never produce anything

Don't let the worries of this world choke you. Christ has said cast all your cares on him because he cares for you. He has said in Matthew 11:30 that his burden is easy and his yoke is light.

Worry is like carrying a pillowcase full of feathers that you think are lead. Hand off the burden to the one you trust or at least believe him when he says its light.

Did you know when we look at scripture, the Greek word for mature is actually made up of two different words? These words are Carry and End. Simply put the implication is that to be mature you need to carry things to their completion and not stop halfway. Share your burden with Christ, but never ever buckle under the weight of your circumstance.

So what's important?

A woman bought a parrot to keep her company but returned it the next day. "This bird doesn't talk," she told the owner. "Does he have a mirror in his cage?" he asked. "Parrots love mirrors. They see their reflection and start a conversation." The

woman bought a mirror and left.

The next day she returned; the bird still wasn't talking. "How about a ladder? Parrots love ladders. A happy parrot is a talkative parrot." The woman bought a ladder and left.

But the next day, she was back. "Does your parrot have a swing? No? Well, that's the problem. Once he starts swinging, he'll talk up a storm." The woman reluctantly bought a swing and left.

When she walked into the store the next day, her countenance had changed. "The parrot died," she said. The pet store owner was shocked. "I'm so sorry. Tell me, did he ever say a word?" he asked. "Yes, right before he died," the woman replied. "In a weak voice, he asked me, 'Don't they sell any food at that pet store?'"

Don't get so distracted with adding in things that you forget to feed yourself on the word of God. You can be excited about all the good things, but don't neglect the necessities of life as a Christian. Read and Pray.

Fruitful Soil and Prime Candidates

Luke 8:8

The rest of the seeds fell on good ground where they grew and produced a hundred times as many seeds. When Jesus had finished speaking, he said, "If you have ears, pay attention!" (Matthew 13. 10- 17; Mark 4:10-12)

Luke 8:15-16

Those seeds that fell on good ground are the people who listen to the message and keep it in good and honest hearts. They last and produce a harvest. (Mark 4. 21- 25) No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl or under a bed. A lamp is always put on a lampstand, so that people who come into a house will see the light

Okay so let's say this message is landing on fertile ground and that you are hearing what is being said this morning.

Let's take a look at what we have studied so far. In this parable the word "Hear" has appeared eight times (verses: 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 21). I think there is an emphasis here.

Can I get an "amen" if you agree that actually hearing and not just listening is essential?

Genuine hearing leads to retention. The word: "retain" means to keep or hold fast or unswervingly.

Hebrews 10:23

We must hold tightly to the hope that we say is ours. After all, we can trust the one who made the agreement with us...

To put it in takeaway terms:

It has nothing to do with how much you may know; it is all to do with how deep it grows. – Get it?

A growing and maturing Christian not only listens; rather they harken to the Word of God. When you are mature, you come with a fitting attitude, a responsive mind and a hearing ear.

The enemy wants you to be shallow, high maintenance and on life-support.

This morning the challenge is to ask yourself:

- Am I good and fertile soil?
- Am I receptive to God's word?
- Am I just listening or am I actually hearing?
- Am I willing to reproduce what I have heard?
- Am I willing to look at the things in my life that disrupt my walk and hinder my growth?

Condemnation is of the enemy but conviction is of God. If you see yourself NOT being fertile soil you can change it. Right now... Today.

Prayer