

The Sower and the seeds Sunday July 10th 2011

Mathew 13:3-9

And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴ and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. ⁶ But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. ⁸ And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear." (NASB)

Many years ago I read a story about a young Pastor in a small community Church, in the Latvian countryside. He preached the same sermon every Sunday, four weeks in a row. The elders spoke to him about it and on the fifth Sunday he preached the same sermon again. The elders then called the area Dean and explained to him what was happening. The Dean sat in on the next two Sunday services, and the sermon was still the same one. He sat down with the young pastor and said to him: "You have preached the same sermon for seven weeks in a row. What is going on? The young pastor replied: "When the congregation start to do what I have said in this sermon, then we will move on to the next one!"

Sometimes, I think every preacher could sympathise with this young pastor. I think Jesus must have felt that way too, especially with His disciples who often didn't get it. I think that is why Jesus finished today's parable with the statement: "**He who has ears, let him hear.**"

The disciples did not understand this parable so Jesus gave them the explanation. We read in verses 18-23:

¹⁸ "Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. 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. ²² And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²³ And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

The question to ask is which category do you find yourself in? Every Sunday the seed is sown from this pulpit. I do not stand here and give you my own opinions and philosophies, but I preach to you The Word of God as recorded in the Bible. I do not preach to you fables or men's inventions, but the Word of God.

There is only one truth, and that is The Bible. There are not many truths, but one truth. There are not many paths to God, but only one path. There is no life or freedom in other religions. Jesus is the only one true Way to God. He said: **“⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. “ John 14:6**

There are no exceptions. We cannot and must not distort, twist, add or subtract to the Bible. There is no “But...”

In the Book of Revelation there is a warning that applies to Revelation, but I believe also applies to the whole of the Bible:

¹⁸ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. Rev.22:18-19

It is a very solemn warning. We must take God's Word as it is given to us. Yet so many people try to make exceptions. They listen to God's Word and then say “But..” They think “it's ok for him, but that doesn't apply to me.” This is very wrong and dangerous thinking.

Lately on the mass media, especially on TV there has been an anti smoking campaign. The ads are graphic depicting the horrible diseases caused by smoking. Yet a smoker can watch these ads, dismiss them and think, “oh well, that won't happen to me.” What is that? Ignorance? Stubbornness? Pride? Lack of judgement?

Yes, granted, there are exceptions. There are some smokers who seem to suffer no ill health, but that is rare indeed.

But let us be clear. When it comes to The Word of God, there are no exceptions. Last Sunday I taught you on forgiveness. We saw that Jesus said that our forgiveness is dependent upon us forgiving those who sin against us.

In the Lord's prayer we pray: “Forgive us our trespasses (sins) as we forgive those who trespass (sin) against us.” Jesus then went on to teach: ¹⁴ **For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. Mathew 6:14-16**

How many of you heard these words last Sunday and thought to yourself “But...”? It’s ok for him to say that, he doesn’t know, he doesn’t understand my situation. I can never forgive so and so for what they did to me. I can’t and I won’t!

If that describes you, then the seed of God’s Word has fallen on the wayside, on the path. The birds have come and snatched it away. The path that Jesus refers to in the parable was like a road way on the edge of a farmers land, where many men and beasts had trod. The ground was hard and weathered. The seed would land on it and stay there being easy pickings for the birds.

Jesus said that the birds is a picture of the evil one – Satan, the devil. He doesn’t want you to accept God’s Word. He doesn’t want you to have eternal life, to be free in Jesus. That is why he comes to snatch away the seed.

If your heart is hardened you do not hear God’s voice. Paul pleaded with the Corinthians: “²⁰ **Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**” 2 Cor.5:20

As Paul did, so do I today. I plead with you, be reconciled to Christ. Please understand that your eternal destiny hinges on this. Where you will be in a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand years from now, will depend on whether you were reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. He does not force us, but he does invite and knock on the door of our hearts, because He loves us. Jesus said: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Rev.3:20-22

Beloved, the time is now, today. Open your ears to hear, your heart to believe and your mouth to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

In Psalm 32: 8-10 we read: ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

⁹ Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, *Otherwise* they will not come near to you. ¹⁰ Many are the sorrows of the wicked, But he who trusts in the LORD, loving-kindness shall surround him.

Please understand that all that is said today is said because God loves you and is a God of mercy. He does not want you to live and die in darkness, He wants you to live with Him, die in Him and live forever in His house in eternity. He has prepared a place for you. Jesus paid the price with His precious blood. All you need to do is be reconciled to Him in faith.

Come to Him today, and pray that He would turn your heart into good soil, where the seed that is sown can bear forth fruit thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold to His glory.

Do not say "But.." anymore, but say "God be merciful to me a sinner. I forgive all who have ever hurt me or sinned against me and I choose today to live according to your Word. Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.