

Parable of the Sower: Deepen My Roots in You!

Key Scripture:

“As for what was sown on thin (rocky) soil, this is he who hears the Word and at once welcomes and accepts it with joy; Yet it has no real root (firm root) in him, but is temporary (inconstant, lasts but a little while); and when affliction or trouble or persecution comes on account of the Word, at once he is caused to stumble [he is repelled and begins to distrust and desert Him Whom he ought to trust and obey] and he falls away.”

Matt 13:20-21 (AMP)

Today's Portion for the Journey:

We are living in a day when more Christians are being martyred for their faith than ever before in history. If you are a believer, you will be persecuted or face trials that will test your faith. Jesus warned that those who do not have a firm root in themselves will fall away in time of persecution. It is vital that we develop that firm root. Jesus provided us with instruction and promises in order to develop a firm root. Let's meditate on His instructions and make sure that we are applying these principles in our lives.

The LORD often used observable aspects of His creation to teach spiritual principles. He calls our attention to consider ants, the lilies of the field, sparrow, the dove, eagles and ravens, lions, horses, mules, oxen, goats, sheep, lions, wolves and serpents. The whole of creation is an illustration designed to allow man to better know his Creator and His ways (Ps. 19). There are many times the Word tells us to meditate upon specific aspects of nature in order to better understand spiritual principles (Matthew 6:25-34). Using these illustrations not only helps us to understand the deeper spiritual meanings, but they also help us to remember His teachings more easily. Greater depth of understanding is possible when we meditate upon “key words” that can connect different portions of Scripture.

The “key scripture” for this lesson appears in the context of the “Parable of the Sower” and examines different reasons those who hear the Word of God fall away. Jesus uses the analogy of different types of soil upon which the seed is sown to help us to understand the forces that prevent some who hear from making a commitment that endures. The most serious element of this passage is that those who do not have a “firm root” in themselves in the LORD will receive the Word and welcome it with joy, but their walk with the LORD is only temporarily and when afflictions (troubles, trials) or persecutions arise because of the Word, they fall away.

This passage shows how important it is that our roots are “firm” in the LORD. The questions we need to ask are: “What does it mean to have a “firm root?” “How healthy are our roots?” and “What can we do to make sure we are firmly established in the LORD.

“Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing

with gratitude.” Col. 2:6-7 The concept of a person having a “root” is one that is visited many times in the Scriptures. Let us dig deeper into the Word to find how to apply this teaching to our lives.

Digging Deeper in the Word:

1. What spiritual applications can we make from meditating upon the characteristics of roots?
 - Roots comprise the hidden part of the plant. They are below the surface, unseen but vital to the life and health of the plant.
 - The quality of the root’s location will determine the nature of the plant, either for good or evil.
 - Roots often comprise a complex and vast system that is as large or even larger than visible portion of the plant.
 - Roots are the source of nutrition and water for the entire plant or tree.
 - Roots are responsible for the storage of nutrients and water for times of drought.
 - Roots anchor and support the plant to hold it in place in time of flood or strong winds.
 - Roots form the “foundation” and strong base of support to allow the plant/tree to grow.
 - Roots speak of permanence, steadfastness and remaining immovable. Roots cause the tree to become established and settled.
 - Roots are the means of reproducing for many plants.
 - A tree that is struck down will send up new shoots and the life of the tree will continue because the roots were healthy.
2. **What kind of “roots” are mentioned in the Word?** A search using a concordance results in 64 occurrences of the word “roots or root”. Those verses show a variety of “roots” in the Word and God’s promises and prophecies related to His dealings with these roots!
 - **“The Root of Jesse”** This is one of the names of Jesus, drawing our attention to His family tree. The root signifies from whom one is descended. This name was a prophetic word and sign of His legitimacy to be the Messiah, the Savior not only of Israel, but also to the Gentiles. Jessi, the father of King David, was the son of Obed, the son of Boaz and Ruth, a Gentile. We must be grafted into this godly lineage through Jesus Christ in order to be saved and be a part of God’s family. Isa. 11:1,11; Isa. 52: 3, Rom. 15:12; Rev. 22:16-17 (See also “Root of David” Rev. 5:5; Rev. 22:16)
 - **The Roots of the righteous:** The roots of the righteous demonstrate permanence, being immovable and established in God. The roots of the righteous are deep and provide nourishment in all seasons, even drought. Jer. 1:7-9; Jer. 17:8; Ps. 1:1-3; 2 Kings 19:30; Prov. 12:3; Prov. 12:12; Isa. 37:11 The tree of the righteous thus rooted in the LORD produces great fruit and exemplifies prosperity. Job 29:19; Isa. 27:6

- **The root of evil:** These roots are based in pride and rebellion toward God and His Kingdom, they are worldly and demonic. (Jud. 5:14; Isa.5:24; Mal. 4:1; Matt. 3:10; Jude 1:12; Job 8:7; 14:8; 18:16) God will “uproot” those whose root is in this world. This is used in reference to God’s judgment in which those who were planted are removed due to rejection of God and His ways. (Amos 2:9; Mal. 4:1; Matt. 3:10) The fruit of the tree rooted in evil will always bring forth “bad fruit.” Matt. 7:17,18,19; Luke 6:43-44
3. **What behaviors cause rottenness to the Root?** The Word describes conduct which results in sickness and death emerging from the roots. Unrepentant sin, in any form will cause rottenness to our roots, prevent good fruit from forming and resulting in God’s judgment. The Word specifically mentions several roots that are particularly poisonous to our walk with the LORD.
- a. **The Serpent’s Root:** Isa. 14:29,30 This word was spoken against Philistia, which means to roll or wallow in self.
- **Poisonous adders** (cockatrice) from the roots, these are venomous snakes, who hunt by ambush, they are well camouflaged by burying themselves in the sand, they draw their prey to them by using the tip of their tail as bait, appearing to be a grub or a worm. When an animal takes the bait, they have the quickest strike of any snake in the world, injecting a poisonous neurotoxin in their victim, resulting in paralysis. The prey ultimately dies when their muscles of respiration are paralyzed, making it impossible for them to breath. The adder is closely associated to mambas, cobras, coral snakes and copperheads.
 - The Serpent’s root also produces the fruit of **fiery, flying serpents** which are even more dangerous than adders, incredibly swift and fierce.
- b. **Idolatry & going after other gods:** results in a root bearing gall and wormwood also referred to as “roots of bitterness.” These roots turn the heart and mind away from God, ultimately kill and defile, causing the righteous to fall away.
- **Gall** refers to several types of deadly poison
 - 1) mere rah (Job 15:13; Job 20:26) and refers to a bodily fluid, gall or green bile produced by the liver.
 - 2) reference to the venom produced by poisonous snakes (demonic) Job. 24:14; and rowsh, often translated gall,
 - 3) Poisonous Plant: Hosea 10, used in a general way with reference to bitterness. This plant bearing poisonous fruit, such as hemlock, but it also represents the poison of a viper and is also used in a general way to bitterness (Lam. 3:5).
 - Wormwood is a plant causing nausea and is greatly bitter. It poisons the water and can cause death. (Prov. 5:4; Jer. 9:15, 23;15; Lam 3;15; Rev. 8:11).
- c. **Casting away God’s Word, not loving His Law:** Results in a **root of rottenness**, defined as putrid, stink. Isa. 5:24 One is reminded of the stench of rotting flesh.
- d. **Associating with evil doers:** These roots are worldly and ultimately invite the demonic. Deut. 29:18; Isa. 5:24

- e. **Root of Sodom and Gomorrah**, poisonous gall, furious venom of serpents, pitiless poison of vipers (demonic) This would represent moral depravity, corruption. Deut. 32:32
- a. **Root of bitterness:** Deuteronomy 29:18 speaks of the root bearing gall and wormwood. Bitterness is defined as a poison, that having a sharp or unpleasant taste, pointed, penetrating or piercing. Those who are bitter are described in the Word as those who are sour or cruel. Grace Studies of the Bible provide a Biblical definition of bitterness stating “it refers to intensity of suffering of mind and body, something that is difficult to bear, causing animosity and reaction, brought about by hatred and antagonism.” It not only affects the person who has the root of bitterness, but the Word says that many are defiled. Bitterness results in a loss of fellowship with the Lord. It steals one’s emotional stability, peace and joy. It prevents one from being fruitful. It can also trigger other sins Acts 8:23; Rom. 3:14; Eph. 4:31; Heb. 12:15.

4. What behaviors will develop the firm root in ourselves?

- a. To be rooted in Jesus: This requires a personal relationship with one’s Savior, spending time with Him, letting Him teach, lead, guide and direct one’s path. Eph. 3:17; Col. 7:7
- b. Guard the condition of your heart by seeking the LORD’s light and asking Him to keep our heart soft toward Him, His correction and discipline. Col. 2:6-7
- c. Separation from the world Ps. 1:1 “does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers.”
- d. Delight in God’s Word and meditation in His Word day and night Ps. 1:2
= Promise: he shall be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not wither and whatever he does, he prospers.
- e. To walk in the paths of righteousness = The righteous man will flourish like a palm tree, and he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Ps. 92:12; Jer. 17:8

5. When Jesus was on the cross, He was offered the drink of wine mixed with gall, most likely a poison that was given to numb the pain and speed up death. Jesus refused the drink, choosing not to circumvent the death on the cross required by God for our salvation. It may have been hemlock, the most well-known narcotic and most toxic substance. The poisonous hemlock was well known in the Middle East and Europe. Its ingestion can be fatal. It was used in the suicide of Socrates. He described the loss of sensation of his extremities. It is a central nervous system poison. Hosea 4:10 translated hemlock in KJV and poisonous weed in NIV. As Jesus rejected that wish would numb His pain and shorten his suffering, so must we take up our cross and follow Him, rejecting bitterness, and walking in the path of forgiveness.

What is the Lord speaking to your heart?

What is your response to the Lord?