

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

Volume 3 – Number 40

November 2, 2014

Order of Services

Sunday November 2, 2014

Song Leader	Derald Sanchez
Prayer	Stan Thompson
Preaching	Dan Wydro – AM Bob James – PM
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Tom Dolan
Prayer for the Cup	Brian Jeffries
Prayer for the Collection	Scott Thomas
Assisting at the Table	Glenn Montgomery
Morning Closing Prayer	Ralph Ruggiero
Evening Opening Prayer	Arnold Thompson
Announcements	Derald Sanchez

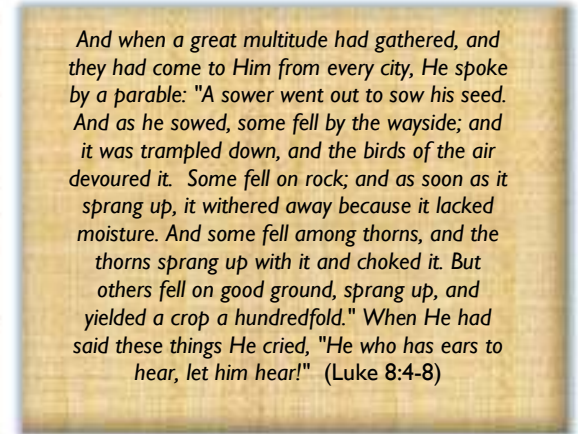
Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

Conditions of a Hearing Heart...

Jesus referred to this parable as “the parable of the sower” in Matthew 13:18, but it could just as easily have been called “the parable of the soils”.

After a seed is planted its successful growth depends largely on the nature of the soil. When a person hears, and understands, the Word of God, the seed is planted in the heart, and, just as in the organic event, what happens next is largely dependent on the nature of the heart. The human heart is much like the soil in that if it is prepared and cared for properly it can receive the seed of the Word of God and produce a fruitful harvest.



In our text, quoted above, Jesus describes four different kinds of soils, or hearts ... three of which either did not produce acceptable fruit, or any fruit at all. The proof of salvation is fruit ... not merely hearing the Word of God and making a profession of faith in Christ. Jesus makes this point clear in His “Sermon on the Mount”;

“For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. ... A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. ... Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.” (Luke 6:43-49)

The Wayside (Hard) - Luke 8:5, 12 ...

This soil represents the person who hears the Word, but immediately allows the devil to snatch the seed away.

How did the heart become *hard*? The *wayside* was the path that ran through the common field, it separated the different plots of land, and the foot traffic of those who walked on it hardened it. Whatever enters through our eyes and our ears eventually ends up in our hearts ... we must take great care as to what, or who, is allowed to walk on our hearts lest we become victims of the condition described by Jesus;

For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.' (Matthew 13:15)

Both Felix (Acts 24), and Agrippa (Acts 26) ... one needing a *more convenient time*, and the other *being almost persuaded* ... are examples of hearts in which God's Word found place, but was not allowed to germinate and grow.

The Shallow - Luke 8:6, 13 ...

Jesus explained that his soil represents those who hear the gospel and are caught up in it as something new or pleasing. They profess to be greatly delighted with it, and are full of zeal for it. Yet they have no root in themselves. They are not true Christians ... their hearts are not changed ... they have not seen their guilt and danger, and the true excellency of Christ. They are not "really" attached to the Gospel ... and when, because of the Gospel, they are tried and persecution comes, they, with no strength of principle, no real confidence in God, and no true religion, fall. Much like the rootless seed withers before the scorching rays of the sun.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (John 8:31 KJV)

It is said that still today in many parts of the Holy Land there are fields where a substratum of limestone is covered with a thin layer of soil. Here the seed can sprout, but the roots cannot grow deep enough into the soil to sustain its life. The sun then withers the plant, and it dies. The sun can be said to represent the *testing* that comes to all who profess faith in Christ ... and it is this testing that allows us to *prove* our faith. Sun can be good for plants that have the ability to develop a deep root system ... just as *testing* can deepen the roots of a true child of God, but it exposes the shallowness of the false Christian.

The Crowded - Luke 8:7, 14 ...

This condition is representative of the instance where there is enough soil for the roots to grow down, but not enough room for the plant to grow up and produce fruit. The plant is crowded out and the fruit is choked. Jesus identifies the cause as *"the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches"*. (Mathew 13:22)

Albert Barnes comments on this passage; "... riches allure, and promise what they do not yield. They promise to make us happy; but, when gained, they do not do it. The soul is not satisfied. There is the same desire to possess more wealth. And to this there is no end "but death." In doing it there is every temptation to be dishonest, to cheat, to take advantage of others, to oppress others, and to wring their hard earnings from the poor. Every evil passion is therefore cherished by the love of gain; and it is no wonder that the word is choked, and every good feeling destroyed, by this "execrable love of gold." (*Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible*)

The Rich Ruler mentioned in Luke 18:18-23, may have allowed his heart to become over crowded by wealth, for when he heard Jesus' words, it is evident that he understood and had a desire to obey them. But, when faced with the reality of what he needed to do to *"inherit eternal life"* his heart seemingly would not let him comply.

The Good - Luke 8:8, 15 ...

This soil alone was fruitful. It illustrates the person who hears the Word, understands it, truly receives it, and proves such by patiently producing fruit. His fruitfulness seems to be an almost necessary consequence of his truly taking God's Divine message to heart.

To hear, to understand, and to bring forth fruit, are three evidences of a genuine believer. One that does not hear the Word cannot understand God's will for his life ... and he who does not understand what the Gospel requires him to be and to perform, cannot bring forth fruit; and he who is not fruitful, cannot be a disciple of Christ, and he who is not Christ's disciple cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

How is your heart? How have you responded to the Word of God?

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (1 Peter 2:1-2)

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:8)

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Responsiveness – Those studying with us in the Thursday morning Perkin's Study ... All of our wayward members

For Physical Healing – Ellen Jinks - Bill Duryea's Parents ... Arnold and Ray Thompson ... Georgia DeLorenzo

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation ... the Evangelist and Teachers We Help Support

EVENTS AND NOTES

- ⤴ AREA GOSPEL MEETINGS...
 - BETHLEHEM PA – NOV 7TH – 9TH, WITH JOE HAMM.
 - PISCATAWAY NJ – NOV 14TH – 16TH, WITH LOWELL SALLEE.
- ⤴ THE CHURCH IN FAIR LAWN WILL HOST A SONG LEADING AND CONGREGATIONAL SINGING CLASS ON NOVEMBER 21ST – 22ND. JOHN WIEGAND WILL CONDUCT THE CLASS. MORE DETAILS TO COME.
- ⤴ BROTHER EDWARDS' LESSONS ARE ON THE WEBSITE. LET'S ALL SEEK TO USE THEM IN OUR EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS!
- ⤴ OUR NEXT THURSDAY MORNING STUDY WILL BE ON OCTOBER 30TH AT THE PERKIN'S RESTAURANT IN PHILLIPSBURG STARTING AT 10AM. ALL ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE WHENEVER YOU CAN ... MORE IMPORTANTLY INVITE THOSE WHO MAYBE SEEKING JESUS!
- ⤴ DON'T FORGET TO JOIN OUR "MEET-UP" SITE ON THE WEB ... [HTTP://WWW.MEETUP.COM/THURSDAY-MORNING-BIBLE-STUDY-AT-PERKINS-IN-PHILLIPSBURG-NJ](http://www.meetup.com/Thursday-Morning-Bible-Study-at-Perkins-in-Phillipsburg-NJ) ... CHECK IT OUT!