

Who's Sowing to the Good Soil?

In the parable of the sower (Luke 8) four classes of soil are described. The “wayside” soil represents the largest area, occupying the fringes of the field and beyond, but is least prepared for planting. It has a closeness to the Devil that allows him to snatch away the word so quickly that it is hardly missed. Involvement in the affairs of the world is so deep that the gospel of Christ is rejected as foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18). No time is found or given for Christ and His teaching. Next, decreasing in size, but slightly less inhospitable, is the “rocky” soil. This group is predictably unstable, easily tempted and easily led astray. The Word could not be snatched from them, but enough lust is found in their hearts (James 1:14-16) to leave them undefended from the Tempter. Then, closer yet to the fertile heart of the field, cleared of rocks, shrinking further in size, is the soil that cannot be distinguished from the good except that seeds of thorns and weeds lie ready to spring up and choke out the good seed. The “cares, riches, and pleasures of life” have enough appeal to distract all but the most faithful. The antidote to this challenge is: “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He himself has said, I will never leave you or forsake you (Heb. 13:5).” Only then can we enjoy the true joy of Christianity.

It sometimes seems that the first three soils are given an unfair amount of attention in the desire to have the largest church, the richest treasury, the finest building and the most renown. This has spurred the creation of denominations where behaviors which once kept people out of churches are now common, and unopposed, within them. “Mega-churches” have arisen where what is believed is de-emphasized and truth long ago gave way to “atmosphere, comfort and entertainment.” It is no surprise that as worldly methods are used to attract and keep worldly people more reports of adultery, fornication, homosexuality, child molestation and other sins come now from the community that was once seen as a safe haven from the wickedness of the world.

In all of this, who is ministering the good seed to the smallest, but most receptive and fertile section of the field, good and honest hearts longing for God's truth (Jn. 17:17)? Where do people go who hunger for truth and righteousness? Which church is wholly given searching out truth, preaching it in love, living it faithfully, worshipping God in spirit and in truth, giving man what he needs rather than what he wants? Without a doubt, this is the smaller group (Mat. 7:13-14), but it is also the most abundantly faithful (Lk. 8:15). The seed is to be broadcast, but let us remember that when good soil is found, Christ will bring them in (Psm. 19:7; Jn. 12:32). Those who truly come to Christ must come on His terms. There is no shame in striving to be the church that Jesus built (Mat. 16:18).

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