

**Rooted: Foundations of  
an Unshakeable Faith  
“Let’s Get Personal”  
September 6, 2020**

Will you pray with me?

Prayer.

Good morning everyone and as Tawnia said thank you for spending part of your Labor Day weekend with us. I’m Shannon and I’m part of our pastoral staff here at North Heartland.

I think that song we just heard, Man in the Mirror, is so very timely for the season of life we find ourselves in. However, if we were honest with ourselves, when I’m honest with

myself the song lyrics that would be more accurate would go something like this, I'm starting with the man out the window, I'm asking him to change his ways, no message could have been any clearer if you want to make the world a better place shame those people who can't seem to get it right and change THEIR mind. Or something like that.

I feel like too often these days most of us are struggling to look at the man in the mirror and ask him to change his ways. It's far easier to look at the man out the window and blame him for all the ills of society. And in some cases perhaps the man out the window is largely to blame but spending too much time looking out the window at "those people" can create all kinds of havoc on our souls.

For instance, recently I was having a conversation with some young adults, they were talking about feeling overwhelmed and saddened by the state of our world to the point of despair and feeling no hope. They listed all the ways the system and others were making our world a mess and they felt hopeless to change it.

As we talked, I was challenging them that spending too much time looking to others to “fix” things can rob us of what God wants to do in us and through us.

If we spend all our time looking at others to correct their behavior but don't take time to look at ours, we surrender the role the Holy

Spirit might have us play in making this world a better place.

As I spoke with these young adults, I shared with them one of my favorite quotes,

“Do for one what you wish you could do for everyone.”

I challenged them to spend less time about fretting over what political party was in power and obsessing over the news through out the world. Note I did NOT say that they should not vote and be active in civic matters or to not be aware of what is happening in the world but rather I challenged them not to obsess over it to the point where all power to change the world is given to those people. I

invited them to look at their corner of the world and to assess what they could do.

Could they use some of their time, talent or treasure to make a difference?

Do they know someone who is going without—someone that they could share resources with? Maybe a friend who lost their job who would appreciate a \$20 gift card for food or gas.

Do they know someone who is overwhelmed by the weight of the world that they could encourage? Maybe a friend who could benefit from a listening ear or a note of encouragement.

Could they give some of their time to serve in an organization that helps the oppressed? Maybe serve at a local food pantry or clothing closet or mentor a younger student.

See it's truly so much easier to look out the window and blame someone else than to take time and look in the mirror to see what we need to address and how we could make a difference. Looking out the window doesn't take much, looking in the mirror could cost us. It could cost our time, our talent, our treasure and more.

And though the examples I gave are primarily about doing, I went on to challenge the young adults (and myself too) to take a look also at their (and my) heart and the emotions and

attitudes that reside there as well as the thoughts they (and I) are thinking these days. I invited them and myself to stop and take a look at the man (and woman) in the mirror and ask them to consider changing their ways and to let change start with them and then allow the Lord to use that change to influence others and to bring light, hope and healing to a broken world.

To take time to honestly assess themselves as the scripture says in Matthew, chapter 7

*How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?  
You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to*

*remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

*Matthew 7:4-5 (NIV)*

And as I spent time processing how that happens, how that has happened in my life- the removal of the log from my eye, I was reminded of this parable that Jesus told which he found in three of the gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) known as the parable of the sower.

From Luke Chapter 8, we read:

*While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: "A farmer went out to sow his seed.*

*As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground,*



*and when it came up, the plants withered  
because they had no moisture.*

*Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up  
with it and choked the plants. Still other seed  
fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a  
crop, a hundred times more than was sown.”*

*When he said this, he called out, “Whoever  
has ears to hear, let them hear.”*

*Luke 8:4-8 NIV*

A few verses later, we see Jesus explaining  
the meaning of the parable to his 12  
disciples.

*“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed  
is the word of God. Those along the path are  
the ones who hear, and then the devil comes*

*and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.*

*Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.*

*The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.*

*But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.*

## Luke 8:11-15 NIV

See one of the ways I have sought to remove the log from my eye, to look at the woman in the mirror and ask her to change her ways, is to take time to consider my response to the Lord and His word in my life as illustrated by the parable of the sower.

At various times in my life, I have been like the seed along the path that takes no root at all -deceived, by the lies in my head and the lies of the enemy.

I still remember people sharing the good news of Jesus' offer to give me grace for my sin, to cancel out my past, to offer me mercy, and to offer me a better way and I just couldn't recognize it.

My pride of self-pity, my unwillingness to see and hear the truth kept me from accepting the offer for many years until I got to a point of overwhelming shame and guilt and once again someone offered me the good news and I decided to take a chance on it.

Can I ask you? Are you willing to hear and to receive the word that the Lord is trying to give to you or are you allowing the lies in your own head and the lies of the enemy to steal it away?

For those who have ears, let him hear. Open your ears and your heart today to allow the Lord's truth to permeate you heart and head and allow His truth to set you free.

I have also been like the seed that falls on rocky ground, where the word of the Lord takes root and shoots up fast but doesn't have the foundation to last.

For me, there are still areas of my life where I can see this at work. There are truths that the Lord has shown me through Rick's teaching, through my small group, and through my personal time with Jesus-truths like the importance of boundaries and not trying to be everyone's savior.

Truths that sound so good and are so needed in my life.

But for me, people pleasing is a huge temptation and one I've continued to struggle

with through out my life. I've gotten better but I still have a long way to go.

Too often I find myself receiving a new revelation or a reminder on the importance of putting God first and not being enslaved to the opinion of others and I'll be all on fire to make that so in my life only to be tempted a day or two later by an email or a post or a text or a comment that alludes to someone being disappointed in me. See the temptation of having the approval of others and the strong desire to avoid being a disappointment to them, can keep this truth from really taking root in my life and so it wilts and dies.

He who has ears let him hear: be on guard against the temptations of your life that seek

to pull you away from the truth the Lord has for you. Truths that will set you free, that will prosper you and not harm you.

I have been like the seed that falls among the thorns where God's truth is choked out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life and this describes some areas of my life in this tumultuous time. When I'm listening on a Sunday morning to Rick or Ladell teach, in the moment I think...yes I need to hear that, I need to take that in and let it take root in my heart and mind.

But then I see a note from the school, or a report from the local or national health officials, or something on my social media feed and I find myself distracted by the cares of this world.

Instead of doing what the word says and what was preached on any given Sunday say ...to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry-I find myself wanting to write or speak out in defense of my point of view and cancel out the other side's arguments.

Instead of stopping to consider why my brother or sister in Christ might feel differently, I want them to just think how I think, do what I do and the way that I do it.

Or I find myself so overwhelmed by the state of things (much like the young adults I spoke of earlier) and I just want to escape to the mountains, or binge watch some TV, or go somewhere and do something so I don't have



to think about it.

He who has ears let him hear: Be on guard and watch for the distractions of this world—distractions that creep in to take your mind off the Lord and the ways He wants to grow you and transform you and use you to help transform the hurting world around you.

So let me ask you...do you see this principle at work in your life? Places and times where you are unwilling to hear and take in the word of the Lord or if you are a not a follower of Jesus...are there times you are unteachable and unwilling to receive correction?

Are there times in your life where you hear something and you know you need to hear it

and to let it take root but you are tempted away by your particular poison...say you read or hear some encouragement about the importance of taking care of yourself and your health and you are all in but then you have a stressful day so you load up on sugar to “get through” instead of taking that walk?

Or maybe you hear a teaching about the importance of loving your enemies and praying for those who persecute you and that all sounds well and good til you get that email or text and now you find yourself demanding justice.

We all have times when we are unteachable, tempted and distracted. But do you also have times when you have been diligent through

practices such as prayer, reflection, journaling, confession with a fellow believe in Jesus to allow God to firmly plant something in your life?

Can you look back at times in your life and see places where there is a before and after?

A time when you had ears to hear and you heard the word of the Lord, allowed that word to be planted in your life and then allow it to grow and multiply?

As I look back over my time as a follower of Jesus, there are many places where I can see fruit that has been born in my life and in the life of others because of my obedience to Jesus and my willingness to let the word of

the Lord take root.

The most obvious one for me was taking in the Lord's truth about victimhood and unforgiveness.

When I started at NHCC I really struggled with this. I was justified in my desire for revenge. And yet try as I might, I couldn't get any satisfaction from it.

It was in my early days at North Heartland through the guidance of other followers of Jesus that I came to realize that I was wanting payment for things that had been done to me that I could never get back. When you have had someone take away a very intimate piece of you, when they have robbed

you of feeling safe, when they have left you to feel immense shame no matter what, you can never get that back from them through vengeance.

And through the work of the Holy Spirit and the influence of other followers of Jesus who spoke the truth in love to me, I began to realize that the way I was going about it was all wrong and would never bring me the healing and restoration I needed.

As pastor Andy Stanley puts it in his book, *“Enemies of the Heart”*,

“The truth is, nothing can make up for the past. There’s an emotional element involved in hurt that cannot be compensated for

through apologies, promises, or financial restitution.

An apology doesn't erase an experience. To some degree, there will always be an outstanding debt. To pursue or wait for 'payback' is futile. It won't happen. It can't happen.

He goes on to say,

To insist on it is to set ourselves up for unnecessary heartbreak. To cling to our hurt while waiting to be repaid is to allow the seeds of bitterness to take root and grow. When that happens, we allow the person who hurt us once to hurt us over and over and over again." (Enemies of the Heart, page 136-137)

I learned this truth here at North Heartland and allowed it to get planted, to water, to nurture it, to grow it and to allow healing and forgiveness to take place in regards to the pain in my past which had kept me trapped for so long. And from that I have been able to share with others what was shared with me. A hope and a healing that is offered through allowing Jesus to take that pain and set us free from it to accept His invitation to forgive our offender and to let Him heal the pain in a way that only He can.

Let he who has ears hear: Jesus offers us a better way and as we take it in and nurture it and allow it to take root, we will see lasting change and true healing in our lives.

So what does all this have to do with the Rooted series we've been in for the last eight weeks?

Well as I was chatting with our lead pastor, Rick, about this series I mentioned that I thought there was a lot to chew on from the teaching we've received each week but that there were also a lot of temptations and distractions as well. I said sometimes I feel like there is so much coming at me that I need some time to process what I've heard and for me I need a framework to help process it as well.

If you are new with us, we have spent the last eight weeks in a series called: Rooted: An



## Unshakeable Life.

The key scripture we revisited each week comes from Colossians chapter 2, verses 6-8:

*Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy,*

*which depends on human  
tradition and the elemental  
spiritual forces of this world  
rather than on  
Christ. Colossians 2:6-8  
(NIV)*

And each week we've been looking at the way the gospel (or Good News) of Jesus differs from the current "cultural gospel".

As Ladell reviewed for us last week, each of these gospels offers us ways to look at the world and ourselves. Let's look back:

...Identity:

- Our culture says it must be achieved.
- Jesus says it can be received.

...Glory:

- Our culture says it's found in being a victim.
- Jesus says it's found in overcoming our victimization.

...Judgment (cancel culture):

- Our culture cancels people for their "sins".
- Jesus cancels sin and forgives the people.

...Atonement (forgiving past mistakes):

- Our culture judges and condemns us for our past mistakes.
- Jesus promises to redeem us and our past.

...Privilege

- Our culture says if we don't have it, we should demand it.
- Jesus says if you have it, you should lay it down and serve others.

### ...Conflict/Disagreements

- Our culture says to label them “haters” and to hate them back seeking revenge and retaliation.
- Jesus says seek justice for the oppressed and display meekness when personally insulted or ridiculed.

So what I'd like to do with the time we have remaining is to use the framework from the parable of the sower to assess where we are with some of the truths we learned in this recent series.

This past week, I took time to watch and read each of the previous messages and I wrote down some key takeaways I had from each message. If you were to listen to them you might have thought of other critical statements to take time to consider but I think this will give us a place to start as my point today isn't to whittle down every message to one statement but rather to take a key principle from each of those messages and invite you to apply the framework to it.

I wanted to do this as a way to invite you to pause and consider what to do with what you hear from the platform each Sunday or when you are in a Bible Study, or you are spending personal time alone with God.

Mainly the opportunity to stop, pause, reflect and ask the Lord where you might be in response to that truth. And I invite you to do that so that you will-as we have been learning each week, stay rooted in Jesus and grow up in Him.

So I'm going to walk us through each week and I'm going to give you some statements to consider and I want you to jot down on paper, in your phone or in your mind, where you fall in regards to that truth.

Are you uninterested or unwilling to hear it?  
Note it as on the path.

Did you hear it but then were tempted away?

Note it as on rocky ground.

Did you hear it but then were distracted by the world?

Note it among the thorns.

Did hear it and it is being planted in you?

Note it as on good soil.

Oh one more thing...I'm assuming you all have other plans for today, so I will NOT be going into a lot of details or try to reteach the concept from each week so if you were not here for it, I would strongly encourage you to watch, listen or read that message in the archives of our website or app-especially if as you listen you think that might be one you need to further reflect on.

Okay let's start with **week one: Adrift in the Storm**. Where are you at with this statement?

It is important to my spiritual health that I stay actively engaged and connected to the body of Christ, His church, by regularly gathering with others for teaching and worship, whether that is in person or via live stream.

In regards to this truth, I am...

- Uninterested or unwilling to accept this truth (on the path)
- Willing to hear this truth but there are temptations in my life keeping it from planting in my heart (rocky ground)
- Willing to hear this truth but I get easily distracted by the cares of this world



(among the thorns)

- Planting and nurturing this truth in my heart on a regular and consistent basis (good soil)

Okay on to **week two: Above Every Other Name**. Let's take a look at where we are with this statement.

Love is what motivated Jesus and love for Him and for others is what should motivate me.

In regards to this truth, I am...

- Uninterested or unwilling to accept this truth (on the path)
- Willing to hear this truth but there are temptations in my life keeping it from

planting in my heart (rocky ground)

- Willing to hear this truth but I get easily distracted by the cares of this world (among the thorns)
- Planting and nurturing this truth in my heart on a regular and consistent basis (good soil)

### **Week three: A Truer Identity**

Every human, EVERY human including me and my enemy, have been created in the image of God and every human, EVERY human including me and my enemy, have fallen short of God's glorious standards as we are born sinners. We, my enemy and I, are united in our identity as people who matter deeply to God and who are in need of redemption.

Jesus offers us that redemption, by offering to forgive all of our sins past, present and future, known and unknown. And then He also gives us a spiritual rebirth that makes us a new creature – a new person in him – with all the rights and privileges and status of a citizen of the Kingdom of God.

And all we have to do is simply say yes to Him.

According to the gospel of Jesus, identity is *received*. There's nothing we can ever do to make God love us more or less than He does right now.

That's a lot to digest. Where are you at with these statements about your identity and the identity of others including your enemies?

In regards to this truth, I am...

- Uninterested or unwilling to accept this truth (on the path)
- Willing to hear this truth but there are temptations in my life keeping it from planting in my heart (rocky ground)
- Willing to hear this truth but I get easily distracted by the cares of this world (among the thorns)
- Planting and nurturing this truth in my heart on a regular and consistent basis (good soil)

**On to week four: A Grander Glory**

Where are you at with this statement?

Glory is not found in victimhood as the world would have me believe. It's way better than that. The gospel of Jesus says there's a grander glory that is found in seeking to be victorious over my pain. It is my will not to give in to people and circumstances that want to defeat me and destroy me. I am not a victim. I am a victor.

In regards to this truth, I am...

- Uninterested or unwilling to accept this truth (on the path)
- Willing to hear this truth but there are temptations in my life keeping it from planting in my heart (rocky ground)

- Willing to hear this truth but I get easily distracted by the cares of this world (among the thorns)
- Planting and nurturing this truth in my heart on a regular and consistent basis (good soil)

## **Week five: A Greater ‘Cancel Culture’**

Jesus does not cancel me or others for the terrible things we have done instead through His death on the cross He cancels the terrible things me and others have done and the debt owed because of those terrible things.

I am not to cancel others for I myself have not been cancelled. I am to treat others as I have been treated.

In regards to this truth, I am...

- Uninterested or unwilling to accept this truth (on the path)
- Willing to hear this truth but there are temptations in my life keeping it from planting in my heart (rocky ground)
- Willing to hear this truth but I get easily distracted by the cares of this world (among the thorns)
- Planting and nurturing this truth in my heart on a regular and consistent basis (good soil)

## **Week six: A Richer Atonement**

Though our culture condemns and removes people because of their past failures, Jesus

forgives and redeems in spite of failures. God uses imperfect, flawed people to make a difference in our world. Even though I, and others will mess up, we can still be used by God.

In regards to this truth, I am...

- Uninterested or unwilling to accept this truth (on the path)
- Willing to hear this truth but there are temptations in my life keeping it from planting in my heart (rocky ground)
- Willing to hear this truth but I get easily distracted by the cares of this world (among the thorns)
- Planting and nurturing this truth in my heart on a regular and consistent basis



(good soil)

## **Week seven: A Higher Privilege**

Many of us have privilege that we are unwilling to admit. As a result of having privilege (whether that's gender, ethnicity, income, educational opportunities, etc), I am called to be grateful to God for what I have and then to be generous with what I have been given for the sake of others and His Kingdom.

Take a moment to pause and think on this.

In regards to this truth, I am...

- Uninterested or unwilling to accept this truth (on the path)

- Willing to hear this truth but there are temptations in my life keeping it from planting in my heart (rocky ground)
- Willing to hear this truth but I get easily distracted by the cares of this world (among the thorns)
- Planting and nurturing this truth in my heart on a regular and consistent basis (good soil)

## **Week eight: A Bolder Confrontation**

My in-born nature desires revenge and retaliation against those I believe have wronged or offended me or others. Jesus invites me to a higher way, namely to seek justice for the oppressed which is not about retribution but about restored balance for those who are oppressed or who are weak.

When I am personally wronged, insulted or hurt (again as Ladell said we are not talking about bodily harm or abuse but rather insults, ridicule and slander) I am to show them love and to be like Jesus who did not take what was owed to Him.

In regards to this truth, I am...

- Uninterested or unwilling to accept this truth (on the path)
- Willing to hear this truth but there are temptations in my life keeping it from planting in my heart (rocky ground)
- Willing to hear this truth but I get easily distracted by the cares of this world (among the thorns)
- Planting and nurturing this truth in my

heart on a regular and consistent basis  
(good soil)

As we close out this time, I'm going to ask the band to come and get in place. I've asked them to replay a song they did a couple weeks ago called "In the Light."

See for me when I spend time looking at the woman in the mirror and do this kind of reflection, I can sometimes get very overwhelmed and feel it is all up to me but as we learned in A Truer Identity, my identity is NOT about me achieving but about receiving what Jesus has already done for me.

So I need to be in the light, and be reminded that I need the Lord to be my light and my

salvation.

But before they do that song, I'm going to ask Richard to play a little music for us as I want to invite you take just a few moments to think over everything from this morning and just be still before the Lord and ask what ONE thing could you focus in the month of September? What one thing would help you be transformed more into the image of Jesus? Not just for your sake but for the sake of others.

Let's pray.

Richard plays for a bit before going into feature.

## In the Light

### Closing blessing

*May you continue to live your lives in Jesus, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. May your roots go down deep and may you yield a crop a hundred fold as you allow his truth to permeate every area of your life.*

### Closing comments

Next week Covid Church

Don't forget to sign up for small groups today by stopping by the info center

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