

# Journey Through the Bible

## A New Heart and a New Spirit

### Message 9: A NEW HEART (5): Dealing with the Heart for the Growth in Life

#### Outline:

- I. **The basic need for the building up of the church is the growth in life; thus, we need to pay our full attention to the growth in life—1 Pet. 2:2, 5; 1 Cor. 3:6, 9; Eph. 2:21:**
  - A. The church is built up by life; only the growth and transformation in life can produce precious materials for the building of the church—Matt. 13:3, 8, 44-46.
  - B. The growth in life is not the improvement of ourselves but the increase of Christ; we need the Lord to turn us from self-improvement to the growth in life for the building up of the church.
  - C. Christ as the life-giving Spirit is the wonderful seed of life; He is all-inclusive; in Him we have everything that we need—1 Cor. 15:45b; Gal. 3:16.
  - D. Our spirit is the very spot into which Christ as the seed of life has been sown, whereas our heart is the field in which Christ grows and spreads; the way to grow in life is to give Him the room to grow in our heart—2 Tim. 4:22; Luke 8:11-15.
- II. **We must deal with the condition of our heart to make our heart the good earth for the full growth of Christ in us—Matt. 13:3-8, 18-23:**
  - A. In the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, the seed is sown into four kinds of soil:
    1. The wayside signifies the heart that has been hardened by worldly traffic and cannot open to receive Christ as the seed of life—vv. 4, 19.
    2. The rocky places refer to the heart that is shallow in receiving the word of the kingdom- vv. 5-6, 20-21:
      - a) Rocks signify hidden sins—Prov. 28:13.
      - b) Rocks signify personal desires—Gen. 13:10-11; 1 Tim. 6:9 and footnote 1.
      - c) Rocks signify self-seeking—Phil. 2:21; cf. Matt. 6:33.
      - d) Rocks signify self-pity—Job 19:21; cf. 2 Tim. 3:2a.
      - e) Rocks also signify temper, lust, self, and flesh—Matt. 5:21-22, 28-30; 6:1-2, 5, 16.
    3. The thorny soil signifies a heart full of anxieties and the deceitfulness of riches that consume the ground in which the seed should grow—13:7, 22:
      - a) Anxiety is the gear that makes the world move; we must do our duty today, but do it without being anxious about our living—6:32-34; 2 Thes. 3:10-12.
      - b) There is no anxiety in the divine life; to God, anxiety is a strange term; God's life is a life of enjoyment, rest, comfort, and satisfaction—Rom. 16:20.
      - c) The source of anxiety is Satan; anxiety comes from Satan to frustrate the fulfillment of God's purpose—Phil. 4:6-7 and footnote 1 of v. 6.

- d) By means of prayer and petition, we should cast our anxiety and burdens on God to free ourselves of the entanglement and oppression of anxiety so that we can be free and happy—Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7; Psa. 55:22.
  - e) We should take care of God's need and His purpose; He then will take care of our future; our future is not under our own care, but under the care of our Father—Matt. 6:33.
4. The good earth is the heart that gives all the room to the seed for its growth—Matt. 13:8, 23; Luke 8:15.
- B. We need to deal with our heart by admitting our condition to the Lord and having a detailed confession under His shining—cf. 1 John 1:7, 9; Hymns, #426.
- III. In order to have Christ as the seed of life deeply rooted in us, we need to be deeply rooted in Him by having a secret life and a secret history with Him—Col. 2:7:**
- A. Roots are growth that occurs beneath the soil; leaves are growth that occurs above the soil.
  - B. Roots are the hidden life, whereas leaves are the manifest life. - Matt. 13:20-21:
  - C. We all need a secret, hidden life with the Lord, a life in which we experience the Lord secretly in the depths of our being—Psa. 42:7a; Matt. 6:3-4, 6:
    - 1. Our spiritual life depends very much on our hidden life before God.
    - 2. Nothing can preserve us as much as a hidden life; if we want to remain standing in the day of trials, we must have deep roots in ordinary times—Jer. 17:7-8.
    - 3. We must take time in secret to absorb the Lord, setting aside time every morning to have direct and intimate fellowship with the Lord in pray-reading His word—Mark 1:35; Matt. 6:6; Psa. 5:3; 88:13; 119:148.

**Focus: We need to deal with the condition of our heart under the shining of the Lord's light so that our heart may be the good earth for the unhindered growth of Christ as the seed of life within us.**

### **READING EXCERPT**

#### **Some Seeds Falling beside the Way**

Verse 4 says, "And as He sowed, some seeds indeed fell beside the way, and the birds came and devoured them." Beside the way is the place close to the way. Because it is hardened by the traffic of the way, it is difficult for the seeds to penetrate it. This kind of wayside signifies the heart that is hardened by the worldly traffic and does not open to understand, to comprehend, the word of the kingdom (v. 19). The birds signify the evil one, Satan, who came and snatched away the word of the kingdom sown in the hardened heart. Those who are the wayside cannot receive the seed because they are neither poor in spirit nor pure in heart. Education, commerce, politics, science, business, and other kinds of worldly traffic go back and forth within their mind, emotion, and will. They are occupied with promotion, position, and ambition.

#### **Some Falling on Rocky Places**

Verses 5 and 6 say, "And others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they did not have depth of earth; but when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they were dried up." The rocky places that do not have much earth signify the heart that is shallow in receiving the word of the

kingdom, because deep within are rocks—hidden sins, personal desires, self-seeking, and self-pity—which frustrate the seed from gaining root in the depth of the heart. The sun with its scorching heat signifies affliction or persecution (v. 21), which dries up the seed that is not rooted. The heat of the sun is for the growth and ripening of the crop once the seed is deeply rooted. But due to the seed's lack of root, the sun's growing and ripening heat becomes a death blow to the seed.

### **Some Falling on the Thorns**

Verse 7 says, "And others fell on the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them." The thorns here signify the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches, which choke the word from growing in the heart and cause it to become unfruitful. The Lord tells us not to be anxious about our living, about what we shall eat, drink, or wear. The third type of soil is not as bad as the second, but it is still difficult for the seed to grow in it because of anxiety and the deceitfulness of riches. All these thorns must be uprooted. If the anxiety of this age and the deceitfulness of riches are rooted out of our heart, the seed will grow.

### **Others Falling on Good Earth**

Verse 8 says, "And others fell on the good earth and gave fruit, some indeed a hundredfold, and some sixty, and some thirty." The good earth signifies the good heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that is without hidden sins, and that is without the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches. Such a heart gives every inch of its ground to receive the word that the word may grow, bear fruit, and produce even a hundredfold (v. 23). The good heart is a heart which has no worldly traffic, no rocks, and no thorns. It has no hidden sins, selfishness, lust, or flesh and no anxiety of the age or deceitfulness of money. This kind of heart is truly pure to match the spirit. Such a heart is the good soil that grows Christ. Christ as the seed of life can grow only in this kind of heart, this kind of soil. This is the soil that can grow the kingdom.

### **Admitting Our Condition before the Lord and Having a Detailed Confession under His Shining**

In order to have a genuine confession, we need to come into the presence of the living Lord under the covering of His redeeming blood, recognizing the condition of our heart. If we do this, we will open the way for the life-giving Spirit to touch our being in a specific way, item after item, so that we can make a thorough confession. Merely to confess that we are sinful in a general way is not sufficient. We need the Spirit to enlighten us item by item, to point out to us all the defilement in our heart, so that we will confess in detail our failures, our weaknesses, our evil intentions, and our evil motives. When the Spirit enlightens us in such a way, we may feel shameful, and we may even begin to weep. However, such enlightening for a thorough confession enables us to have our heart sprinkled by the redeeming blood of Christ from an evil, accusing, and condemning conscience (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 1:9). After we have made a thorough confession, we will have a conscience without offense (Acts 24:16), and we will feel released.

Although we may feel that because the Lord already knows how sinful we are, we do not need to confess in such a detailed way, we need to realize that the Lord wants to impress us with our condition and how much we need Him. Sometimes when children misbehave and are being disciplined by their parents, the parents ask the children to say what it was that they did wrong. Although the parents know what the problem is, they still ask the children to confess it so that the children can be impressed with what they have done. Our Father knows everything, but His intention in having us confess is that we will be impressed with the negative things that are within us. This kind of confession is not once and for all. The more we practice to have a thorough confession, the softer our heart will become.

### **Questions:**

1. What does it mean to have a "hidden" life?
2. How does your personal relationship with the Lord affect the building up of the church?

## Scripture Reading:

**Matt. 13:1** On that day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea.

**Matt. 13:2** And great crowds were gathered to Him, so that He stepped into a boat and sat, and all the crowd stood on the shore.

**Matt. 13:3** And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow.

**Matt. 13:4** And as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the way, and the birds came and devoured them.

**Matt. 13:5** And others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of earth.

**Matt. 13:6** But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered.

**Matt. 13:7** And others fell on the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them.

**Matt. 13:8** But others fell on the good earth and yielded fruit, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

**Matt. 13:9** He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

**Matt. 13:19** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.

**Matt. 13:20** And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

**Matt. 13:21** Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled.

**Matt. 13:22** And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

**Matt. 13:23** But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

**Luke 8:15** But that which is in the good earth, these are those who in a noble and good heart hear the word and hold it fast and bear fruit with endurance.