

On Stony Ground

Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

Mark 4:3, 5-6, 6-17. "Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended."

Somehow I get the feeling that the stony ground refers to the spiritually lazy people. They hear the word of God and like what they hear, but that is about as far as they are willing to go. Sure, heaven sounds nice and living with the Lord forever would be great, but that is all that they are willing to accept. It is as if

they're saying, "Save me, take me to heaven, but don't expect me to do anything." Some even promote this by saying that there is absolutely nothing that you can do, the Lord has done it all.

Yes, the Lord did it all as far as paying the sin debt for the world. Salvation came by Grace and we receive forgiveness by the mercy of God. Even though this is true, isn't there something for us to do? Yes, we decide to obey and to follow the Lord. It is up to each of us to grow in the knowledge of the Lord. Sure God could give us a complete knowledge of the bible and the understanding of it, but he is not going to do it. If you want to know the scriptures and the will of God, you are going to have to read the bible, study it, pray for understanding and walk with God.

The stony ground shows the effects of those who did not do this. They that heard the word in a heart likened to the stony ground, didn't put down any roots. Without roots there was no growth and therefore no fruit was produced. A plant may look like it is healthy, but in time of stress, and trouble it will wither and die. This is what the Lord is speaking of when he says that the stony ground didn't let the seed that was sown take root and

really grow. For a time all may seem to be well, but then affliction or persecution comes that is the end of it.

It may be the temptation to do something sinful, or the temptation to go along with the world to avoid persecution, but the true condition then shows. The Lord was teaching here the value of putting down roots so as to prepare for the trouble of this life. Unlike some of the so-called preachers of today, Jesus never said that all would be easy for his people. He is teaching the importance of learning, putting down roots, and being ready to face the trials of this life. As a plant needs good, deep roots to stay healthy in times of dry weather, the believer needs to have deep spiritual roots to stay healthy in times of trial and trouble.

In this complete parable Jesus talked about three different kinds of ground that didn't have good results, but notice that there was, and is, only one kind that had a good harvest. That is the one that had good ground that allowed good roots. If the roots are not good the plant won't be either, and that is true both in the material world and in the spiritual. What kind of ground is in your heart?

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