

By The Way Side

Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

Mark 4: 3, 15: "Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: 4. And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. / 15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts."

By the wayside illustrates the condition of many people through the ages. So many hear the word of God and for a moment think of their lack of a relationship with God, but only for a short time. They will often say that they know that they need to come to church and serve the Lord, but they never come and do anything about it. One person used to say, "I'd like to get closer to the Lord." From time to time I heard this and I thought, "Why don't you quit saying it and do it?" Good intentions will never get a person to heaven.

Like the prodigal son we have to come to a moment when we stop thinking and talking about it and arise and do it. Stop sitting at home and saying that you know that you should go to church and confess the Lord and

obey his word. Why? Because if that is all you ever do, you will die lost. If the prodigal son had continued to say what he should do and stay in the hog pen, he would have died there. However, he thought of what he needed to do and he got up and made the effort to do it. Just as his father met him, our heavenly father will meet you and will receive you.

Just as Jesus said that Satan cometh and taketh the word away that was sown in the heart he will still do it today. Throughout thirty plus years of preaching I have seen people that the Lord was calling and they showed some interest, even coming to church for awhile, then someone, or something, would happen and they would turn away. Sometime they saw something in the life of a Christian that they didn't like and would be offended. They evidently thought that a Christian was perfect in every word and deed. While a sincere Christian wants to do right at all times, he is human and still in the flesh. That means that he will fail at times. If the person that turned away before accepting Jesus had followed the Lord, he would have been surprised that he too, would have erred at times, no matter how much he would have wanted not to.

The devil has many ways to distract a person from following the Lord. How many have started to follow the Lord and then had something unpleas-

ant happen to them, or one of their family? I have heard those who said, "I'm trying to live right and why did this happen to me?" Well, Satan may have just wanted you to get angry at God, or it may be that sickness, an accident, or some thing happened because these things happen to all of us in life. Some think that if they confess the Lord that nothing bad will, or can, happen to them. This comes from erroneous teaching that some preachers present as the word of God. They say it but Jesus didn't promise that to anybody in this life. Rather he said, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matthew 5: 44-45.

It is up to you whether you allow the word of God to take root in your life and grow, or whether you allow some distraction to turn you from the Lord. In spite of all the things that can, and do, happen, God is true and we either live for him, or we try to live without him. Some say that they don't want to face an eternity without God and I agree. At the same time I don't want to face this life and world without him either, and Thank God, I don't have too, and you don't either.

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