**Rocky Soil: Can’t Grow Fruit On The Rocks**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday July 14th, 2019

Text: Matthew 13:18-21; Mark 4:16-17; Luke 8:13

### Intro

1. In a perfect world, those who become Christians would remain faithful all their lives, and one would only need to focus on unbelievers (Preaching and teaching).
   1. I Cor. 10:12: Paul admonishes saints to “take heed lest you fall.”
2. Unfaithfulness is a problem that faces all servants of Christ as much today as in days of old:
   1. Judas – desire for money motivated him to betray Christ *(Mt. 26:14-16)*
   2. Demas – love of the world motivated him to go back into the world *(II Tim. 4:10)*
   3. Hymanaeus and Alexander – faith became shipwrecked *(I Tim. 1:18-20)*
   4. Hymenaeus and Philetus – departed the faith for false doctrine *(II Tim. 2:16-18)*
   5. Diotrephes – love of “self” motivated him to reject apostles’ teachings *(III Jn. 9)*
3. Jesus discussed six basic causes of unfaithfulness, we will look at first three today:
   1. Mt. 13:18-21: Rocky Soil: Affliction, Persecution, and Temptation (Lk. 8:13)
   2. The “rocky soil” describes a “Fair-Weather Christian” who falls away when things get tough because of their faith!
4. The problem is not:
5. Person never heard the word – *Mt. 13:20: Heard it! (Mark 4:16)*
6. Refusal to receive the word – *Mt. 13:20: Received it with joy! (Mark 4:16)*
7. What causes a Christian to become unfaithful?

#### Affliction (Trouble)

* 1. Mt. 13:21: “Affliction (NKJ: “Tribulation”)…arises...” (Mk. 4:17)
  2. Trouble or affliction is the common lot of man – Job. 14:1-2
     1. Family trouble
     2. Health trouble
     3. Economic trouble (financial, security, etc.)
     4. Interpersonal relationships trouble
  3. But this is specific trouble, targeted affliction: “because of the word” *(Mt. 13:21).*
     1. This affliction can take many forms, often from family troubles, interpersonal relationships, and in some cases can affect economic trouble (jobs).
  4. Why would trouble cause one to forsake Christ Who shed His blood for their sins?
     1. Perhaps they feel as Christians they should be excused from trouble?
        1. Mt. 10:16-23: Jesus never promised it would be easy.
     2. Grow weary from targeted trouble – II Tim. 3:12
     3. May not understand the value of such trouble – Js. 1:2-4
        1. Trouble exercises our faith and produces endurance.
  5. Trouble in of itself does not cause one to fall away, but one’s reaction to it.
     1. The “rocky” Christian has no firm root, perhaps from lack of diligence in study, or a real commitment to live according to Christ’s pattern.
     2. The earthly consequences become more real or important to this individual than the eternal, long-term blessings *(Neh. 2:18; 4:6, 8-15).*
     3. Apostles not immune – they all fled! (Mark 14:27-31, 50-52)
  6. The one who falls away because of *affliction* teaches us: you can’t grow fruit on the rocks!

#### Persecution

* 1. Mt. 13:21: “Persecution arises because of the word…” (Mk. 4:17)
  2. Persecution “because of the word” is suffering for being a Christian. (I Pet. 4:12-16)
  3. Forms of persecution (still around today in parts of the world):
     1. Verbal abuse, intimidation – I Pet. 4:3-4
     2. Physical abuse – Acts 5:40-42; 7:58
     3. Death – Acts 7:58-60; 12:1-2
        1. June 9, 2019: 95 Christians killed in a Mali village (West African Nation)
        2. <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2019/june/christian-village-in-mali-virtually-wiped-out-after-jihadists-massacre-100-men-women-children>
  4. The early church was persecuted (hunted):
     1. Apostles suffered – *Acts 4-5*
     2. Church was scattered – *Acts 8:1-4*
     3. Saints mercilessly hunted down – Acts 22:4-5; 26:9-11
     4. Paul suffered – *II Cor. 11:24-28*
  5. Any value in persecution?
     1. I Pet. 1:6-9: Peter says the one who endures through the trials obtains the salvation of one’s soul!
  6. Persecution in of itself can’t make one fall away, but one’s reaction to it.
     1. Paul said he tried to force saints to blaspheme *(Acts 26:11)*
     2. Roman persecutions tried to force saints to blaspheme and deny Christ
     3. When faced with torture and death, many refused *(Acts 26:10)* that they may “obtain the salvation of their soul” *(I Pet. 1:9)*
     4. The “rocky” Christian who has no firm root, will only look at the temporal consequences, and ignore the long-term blessings
  7. The one who falls away because of *persecution* teaches us: you can’t grow fruit on the rocks!

#### Temptation

* 1. Lk. 8:13: “…in time of temptation fall away” (Perhaps to make trouble stop)
  2. Temptation doesn’t cause one to fall away, but giving in to it can!
     1. Mt. 13:21: Doesn’t mention temptation by name but says when affliction and persecution arise, the “rocky” Christian falls away
     2. Js. 1:14-15: We sin when we give in to temptation.
     3. When we let “affliction or persecution” get to us so that we give in to the temptation, we did so because we desired something more!
  3. God enables us to resist temptation (I Cor. 10:13):
     1. Resist temptation with knowledge
        1. Know how it works – Js. 1:14-15: *Avoid things that will arouse our lusts.*
        2. In the case of persecution, remember it is only temporary (Rom. 8:18).
     2. Resist temptation with determination
        1. Determine to resist (Js. 4:7).
        2. Daniel resisted with purpose *(Dan. 1:8: “Made up his mind…”).*
     3. Resist temptation by dedication
        1. Love righteousness and unrighteousness loses its appeal (Rom. 12:9).
  4. Temptation when not resisted will turn a heart from God!
  5. The one who falls away from giving in to *temptation* teaches us: you can’t grow fruit on the rocks!

## Conclusion

1. Affliction, Persecution, and Temptation are symptoms of the greater problem:
   1. Mt. 13:21: “No firm root in himself.”
      1. You can’t grow grain on the rocks!
      2. This person’s heart never became fertile soil.
      3. Lack of dedication caused weakness!
   2. The solution is not to promise a removal of trouble, persecution or temptation.
      1. Troubles will come – II Cor. 1:3-5
      2. Persecution is sure – II Tim. 3:12
      3. Temptation is inevitable – Heb. 4:15-16
2. The solution is to work on the soil – The grain must take hold in your heart and grow!
   1. Fruitfulness is equated with being the good soil *(Mt. 13:23; Mk. 4:20; Lk. 8:15)*
3. *The Fruit can’t grow on the rocks! – Mt. 13:21; Mk. 4:17; Lk. 8:13*
4. Let your faith take firm root and stand firm! *(Eph. 6:10-13)*
5. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized!
6. If a Christian in error, turn back before it’s too late! Repent & be renewed.
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!