

## The Condition of our hearts – The superficial heart

A missionary in India asked everyone who wanted to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour after preaching in a village. Every person raised their hands to the delight of the missionary. Some time later he discovered that the interpreter had misinterpreted his call to salvation and had said, "Every person who would like a cow please raise your hand." He was afraid that no one would raise their hands to respond to the call to salvation and embarrass his guest – the missionary. However, all it did was highlight a superficial relationship with God putting the honour of the missionary above that of God.

Matthew 13: 1 – 8 ; 18 – 23

### 1) Having no root

- We are to be rooted into Christ himself.
  - Jeremiah 17: 7 But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.
  - Colossians 2: 6 – 7 So then, 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.
- The soil in which we are to be rooted is Christ Jesus himself.
  - It is when we trust in Him completely that we plant the roots of our lives in His life drawing the very sustenance of our lives from His being.
  - Another way to say that our trust is in Him is that our confidence is in Him. We are absolutely confident about everything in life because we are certain that everything that happens comes from Him, that He is in control of our lives – present and future.
  - This confidence is incorporated in every aspect of our lives.
  - We are confident in him to take care of our personal lives, our work, family, social lives.
  - This confidence allows no place for fear or worry. It is deeply rooted in the Lord and draws strength from him as the tree's roots draws its sustenance from the soil nourished by the stream.
  - When we are rooted in Christ, with our trust and confidence completely in him, we will never fail to bear fruit.
- However, our theme today is the seed that had a shallow root.
  - This is the life that has a superficial trust in Christ and a lip service confidence in him – which is really not confidence at all.
- A person who does not trust in the Lord is a doubter.
  - James 1: 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.
- The seed without root is therefore the person who doubts and doesn't have their trust in Jesus.
  - Jesus had put it another way when He told the parable of the houses that were built on the rock and on the sand.
  - In this parable it wasn't about trust and confidence, but obedience to his word.
  - However, obedience comes from faith.
  - We obey because we believe in the truth and authority of who He is.
  - When we don't believe we don't obey and our lives get washed away in the storms of life.

## 2) A superficial façade

- A façade is a deceptive outer appearance that differs from the true self.
- A superficial Christian often has an exuberant front with all the right Christian terminology.
  - Other people are often impressed by their spirituality and fervour in serving the Lord.
- The problem is that all that spirituality and fervour is only skin deep.
  - Such actions are rooted in the self and not in Christ.
  - Prayers are meant to impress others and not a true seeking after God.
  - Generally, only feel good Bible verses are quoted. Superficiality wants emotion from the Bible. Depth wants true knowledge of God – to know him in deeper ways to have a deeper relationship with Him.
  - Knowledge is indispensable to the Christian life. If we do not use the mind that God has given us we condemn ourselves to spiritual superficiality and cut ourselves off from many of the riches of God's grace.
  - Superficiality also leads to legalism. Keeping the letter of the law and putting high standards on others that God never intended us to keep. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocrisy in doing that, as they expected people to keep rules that they themselves didn't keep.
  - It sometimes also leads to grace without righteousness.
- Superficial churches resort to showmanship and worldly antics to please people, because it's void of the power of God that comes from being rooted in Christ and his Word.
  - The church right now has more fashion than passion, is more pathetic than prophetic, and more superficial than supernatural. (Leonard Ravenhill).

## 3) The truth of the matter

- Matthew 13: 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.
- Matthew 13: 20 – 21 The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.
- The truth or crux of the matter of the depth of a person's walk with the Lord is seen during hard times.
- The superficial Christian falls away as they had no depth of relationship with the Lord.
- Besides persecution and hardship, they also fall away for other reasons as well, such as when things don't go their way, being let down by Christians, being hurt.
  - Story of the believer who was hurt by Christians and wanted to return to his old religion. The Lord said that he was a Christian because of Him and not because of Christians. He then persevered in the faith.
  - Superficial Christians often don't just leave, but also become bitter against Christians and the church.

How well rooted in Christ and His Word are you?

When the sun comes up – when trouble or persecution comes – how strong will you stand in your faith?