

Heart Conditions – The Rocky Heart (Matthew 13:1-23)

Parable = this is like that. Last week we discovered why Jesus often spoke parables? (revealing and concealing)

- Won't re-read or cover again **verses 10-17**
- Read **1-9** and **18-23**

These soils **represent/picture** four different heart conditions

- The hard heart
- The rocky/shallow heart
- The crowded heart
- The good heart

These conditions may possibly come and go in different seasons of life

- Last week = surface hardness (untruths, rebellion, pain); now = **hard spots & places underneath**

The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing the word. (Verses 20-21)

This heart **receives the message of the Kingdom** (the Word of God) **happily** (as opposed to the hard heart)

- This heart:
 - **Agrees** with God's Word
 - **Responds** to God's Word
 - **Begins** to be nourished on God's Word
- The Word has an effect – growth begins
 - All is well (**joy**)
 - But it **doesn't last long**
 - **One of two (or perhaps both) things happens: Problems and/or persecution**

Everyone is going to encounter problems in this life

- Some will encounter **persecution for believing the Word** (our missionaries/our culture too/live godly)
- **But not everyone will fall away**
 - The picture here is the person who starts well (**receives it with joy**), **but doesn't last long** (vv. 20-21)
- **What makes the difference?**
 - Why do some Christians survive **problems** and **persecution** and others do not?

The problem is not problems...

- Scripture says they are to be **expected** and can be good
 - **James 1:2-4**, NLT
 - **1 Peter 4:12-14**, NASB
- God will be present with us and **comfort** us in our affliction
 - **2 Corinthians 1:3-5** and **7:5-6**, NASB
- The Scriptures promise that we can be **enriched** by problems
 - **1 Peter 5:10**, ESV
 - **Romans 5:1-5**, NLT
 - **Psalm 119:67, 71, 75, 92**, NASB
 - Verse 67 = developing roots (Cf. Martin Luther)
 - Vv. 71 & 75 = an appreciation of affliction
 - Verse 92 = a picture of deep roots
- **The Christian is presented in the Scriptures as being joyful in tribulation since there is a deeper experience of the presence of Christ and of the kingdom of God when tribulations come.** –Spiros Zodhiates¹

¹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).
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So, **problems/affliction** are actually present in our lives as part of **God's growth plan** for us (**soil enrichment**)

The problems are not the problem—the issue is how we **steward** our hearts through the **probs/persec.**

- Problems can yield **deep soil or rocky hard places**

We all know that what you do with rocks when cultivating soil is **remove** them (they're gonna be there)

- Cf. Galilee
- If we allow them to persist, we can't get deep roots

The **shallow heart** has failed to do rock removal... has not stewarded **the new heart** well

- **Ezekiel 36:26-27**, NIV
- **Proverbs 4:23**, NLT
- **Psalms 1:1-3**, NIV

Our soil becomes **shallow** and **rocky** when we do not **steward problems** and their resultant feelings well

- You are **rejected** = bitterness
- You are **wounded** = fear
- You are **wronged** = unforgiveness
- You do **wrong** = shame
- Life goes **wrong** = disappointment

This is just life: We will be **rejected**, we will be **wounded**, we will be **wronged**, we will **do wrong**, and life will **go wrong** (Cf. **problems** and **persecution**)

When we allow the **stones of bitterness, fear, unforgiveness, shame** and **disappointment** to live in our hearts we cut off the root system of life in God that comes from God's **word**, and we **wither**

- The rocks have to be **removed** for the soil depth and richness to increase and the **roots to go deep**
- **My struggle with the stone of unbelief/def. of goodness...**

This is the hard work of: Prayer, repentance and reconciliation; and the grateful receiving/giving of grace

You know where we often miss out on the blessings and graces of life with Jesus?

- Our neglect of **confession**
- **Confession** is key. **Confession** is the doorway to **healing**.
- **Too easy in the mind. Say it out loud. Write it down. Confess it to someone else!**
- **James 5:16-18**, NLT
 - **Do not underestimate the power of confession followed by prayer!**
 - Confess the stone of _____.
 - Deepens the soil, opens the ground for **roots** to go deep

Falling away? **Isaiah 41:10**, NASB

Ephesians 3:16-21, NLT