

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 464

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23). In this letter we will focus on the importance of understanding what the Bible is teaching! A farmer went out to sow his seed but all of his seed did not grow and produce anything. Some seeds fell along the path and were eaten by birds. Others fell on rocky ground and never developed a root system, Others fell amidst thorns that choked the plants and prevented the harvest. Some seed, however, fell on good ground and produced a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.

Here is the way Jesus explained the parable: **“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 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 seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”** (Matthew 13:16-23)

Fortunately, we can choose what kind of soil we are! We can all be good soil if we choose to be. We can all study and meditate on the word of God if we choose to do so. We can all be diligent and allow the seed to make deep roots in our heart so that persecution will not cause us to fall away. We can all choose to give the word of God priority over earthly wealth and worries. We can all be “good soil” if we choose to do so! Every day should be a day for meditating on the word of God!

1. The seed eaten by the birds represents people who hear the message of the kingdom but do not understand it. Legal papers are uninteresting and boring unless they are a will mentioning our name. In 1994 Anna Nicole Smith, a well-known model and dancer, married billionaire J. Howard Marshall. She was 26 years old and he was 89. Howard died a year later. With billions of dollars hanging in the balance suddenly legal papers are no longer boring! Suddenly a great many people became interested in actually understanding what Marshall's will actually said. Marshall's wealth, of course, pales into insignificance by comparison with the inheritance promised to us by God. If you understand the promises God has made to you the devil cannot steal your inheritance!

2. The seed sown on rocky places represents shallow Christians who are easily offended. Immaturity in Christ can be fatal. Paul had to feed the Corinthians with milk and not meat because they were spiritual infants (1 Cor. 3:1-4). The writer of Hebrews referred to the same problem as the Hebrews should have been teaching others, but like infants they still had to be fed by someone else (Heb. 5:11-14). Ten men can do more work than a hundred babies. John the Baptist was a mature believer and not like a reed swayed by the wind (Matt. 11:7). Because his spiritual roots were deep he died as a faithful martyr without denying his Lord.

3. The seed that fell among the thorns is like a man who becomes so obsessed with the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches that he bears no fruit for God. King Solomon wrote: **“I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and**

planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man’s heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.” (Eccl. 2:4-11) After years of trying to find happiness in “things” that are “under the sun” he raised his eyes to God who was “above the sun” and wrote: **“HERE IS THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER: FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN”** (Eccl. 12:13).

4. The good soil is like a man who hears the word and understands it! The fact that the good soil produced different amounts of harvest is due to the fact that Christians have different gifts and different abilities. In the parable of the talents one man got five talents, another two, and still another only one **“each according to his ability.”** (Matt. 25:15) So one man had a hundred fold increase, and another had sixty, and another thirty. The harvest, however, was not selfishly hoarded but generously shared. Paul wrote: **“He who has been stealing must steal no longer but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.”** (Eph. 4:28)

Step # 1 in the process of producing a harvest involves “understanding.” Remember! “the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it.” Understanding, however, is only half of the solution. Understanding what God wants will do no good unless we “do” what we “understand”.

“NOW THAT YOU KNOW THESE THINGS. YOU SHALL BE BLESSED IF YOU DO THEM.” (JOHN 13:17)

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce