

Each Day I'll Sow

Some refer to it as the Parable of the Soils because of the different types of ground it describes. But Jesus called it the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:18), perhaps emphasizing the relationship of the one spreading the seed to the various soils he encounters. After His earthly work was finished, His disciples would take the gospel into the uttermost parts of the world. Along the way, they would come across all kinds of people: from those who accepted the word to those who gave the King no residency in their heart. They were not to measure this work by their results but by the need to keep sowing the seed.

One who did receive the word implanted was Saul of Tarsus. The Lord said he was as “a chosen instrument of Mine to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings” (Acts 9:15). This was fulfilled in Acts 24–26. Three chapters. Three rulers: Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. Three hearts that were wayside soil.

What is it that still causes men to reject the gospel? What kind of responses should we expect as we sow the seed of the King each day?

FEAR. “Felix became frightened” (Acts 24:25). He was the governor of Judea, married to Drusilla, the daughter of Agrippa. Historians describe him as “self-indulgent, dishonest, unjust, and immoral.” When Paul preached about righteousness, self control, and the judgment to come, Felix tried to escape accountability. He became frightened and sent Paul away. What he should have done was realize that it is a “fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

The answer to fear is love. Fear is a stepping stone, a starting place. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 1:7). But fear should move you to action. You must grow in your faith and understanding to eventually reach the point where “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:8). Obedience and service to God then become things that you do because you love Him and want to please Him. Felix didn’t let his fear go far enough. Some will refuse to go to the doctor for fear of what their diagnosis might be. How much more foolish is it to refuse the word of God for fear of what He will require of you?

PRIDE. Festus was Felix’s successor. He knew Paul had appealed to Caesar in Rome but didn’t want to send the prisoner without listening to the case for himself. After hearing Paul’s defense, Festus said, “Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad” (Acts 26:24). Rather than allowing the seed to penetrate his heart, it was gobbled up by pride. “The problem is not with me, Paul. It’s with you. You’re crazy.”

The answer to pride is submission. Instead of accusing and blaming someone else for your condition, you have to realize that sin is your problem and God is your only

solution. When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius to find an assembly of his friends and family, the Centurion said to him, “we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord” (Acts 10:33). Oh, that every Bible study would begin this way! Paul assured Festus that he was in his right mind and was speaking words of sober truth (Acts 26:25). The word of God is right whether you choose to believe it or not.

PROCRASTINATION. King Agrippa, whose father had John the Baptist beheaded, was listening alongside Festus and put off Paul with these famous words, “in a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian” (Acts 26:28). His tone of voice and inflection are lost in translation. It is unclear whether he said this sarcastically to protect himself in front of his guests or if he was truly sincere. Either way, the emphasis was on time: in a little while, but not now.

The answer to procrastination is urgency. Time is of the essence. To wait for a short time or a long time to obey the Lord is running a risk. There are only two options. To almost accept the gospel message is to reject it. To almost obey is to disobey. Agrippa’s reply to the preaching of Paul inspired these lyrics by Phillip Bliss: “Almost persuaded now to believe, almost persuaded Christ to receive. Seems how some soul to say, ‘Go, spirit, go thy way. Some more convenient day on Thee I’ll call.’ Almost persuaded, harvest is past. Almost persuaded, doom comes at last. Almost cannot avail, almost is but to fail. Sad, sad that bitter wail. Almost—but lost.” See the urgency of obedience. Today is the day of salvation.

We must not be discouraged when we encounter these and other responses to the gospel. Let us keep sowing the seed, lest we ourselves fall by the wayside.

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