

“Stories ~ The Sower” 8.16.09

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- Jake’s senior year was winding down - - his coach Dave Frantz wanted Jake to get in the game for @ least one play; so the coach decided to do something that is very foreign to competitive sports.
- Coach Frantz explained Jake’s situation to the coach of the opposing team. He asked if the score was lopsided @ the end of the ballgame, if it would be okay if they put Jake in for just 1 play. Jake would take the hand – off & touch one knee to the ground, so that no one would risk hurting him; the opposing coach agreed.
- @ the end of the 4th quarter with 5 seconds left Jake’s team was losing 42 – 0; that definitely qualified as lopsided ☺
- Jake’s coach called a time out, & then the opposing team’s coach came sprinting on the field. Coach Frantz was concerned that he had changed his mind & asked him, “Do you have concerns about getting Jake in the game?” & the opposing coach answered, “Yes, I do; I don’t want him not to just get in the game - - I want him to score!
- This is unheard of in competitive sports - - the opposing teams head coach was also the Defensive Coordinator & a score would ruin his defense’s chance to have a shut-out; this JUST DOESN’T HAPPEN.
- You give Jake the ball & we will make sure he scores!
- Coach Frantz went to the huddle & pointed at Jake; “Big boy, you are going to the house” - - Jake started jumping up & down.
- What happened next is an Ohio football legend:
- Jake’s QB took the snap - - handed off to Jake; & Jake tried to take a knee as he had practiced all week, but his team – mates yelled @ him not to go down.
- He stopped just (2) inches from the ground, stood up & took a few steps backward; mean-time; Jake’s team mates & coaches were pointing out the end zone; the referee’s were pointing toward the end zone + the opposing team were all pointing @ the end zone.
- Jake walked slowly toward the line of scrimmage, & (21) players parted in front of him like the Red Sea before Moses himself & then Jake took off for the end zone that was (49) yards away; it took him almost (12) seconds to sprint; everybody on the sidelines were running step by step with him; & Jake Porter scored his very 1st touch down!
- Bleachers exploded - - grown men were crying - - hardened football players were hugging each other. Jake’s touchdown became everybody’s touchdown!
- I thank God for honest, good-hearted people!

I’ve got a question for those of you who share the vast responsibility (privilege) of loving & influencing children in your span of care.

If you could leave one thing to your children that would benefit them the most, that would sustain the test of time & make their lives joy-filled, what would you leave them as your PERSONAL LEGACY?

If the sky were the limit, what would it be? Maybe you would like to leave them financially solvent-well off, taking the HEAVY financial obligations of this life off of them or Maybe not.

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Today Jesus tells a story that gives us some insight into one of the most priceless legacies we can leave our children.

The parable is designed to produce a personal reflection on this question; “What single type of response to God’s Word have I given?”

I. The Parable of the Sower

A. (R) Luke 8: 4 – 8 or p. 788 in pew Bible

1. A very familiar picture for Jesus’ audience.
2. The common ground in Palestine was split into long narrow strips; between the strips there were foot paths which were rights of way, when the seed fell on these paths that were as hard as concrete; the seed had no chance to survive!
3. Some seed fell on...
 - a. Rocky soil – thin layer of earthen soil over a shelf of limestone rock; some seed fell among the...
 - b. Thorns – good soil that was filled with weeds, fibrous roots that grew up alongside the good seed & eventually choked it out; some seed fell on...
 - c. Good soil - that was deep & clean & well-prepared.

B. (R) Luke 8: 9 – 10

I offer a caution to you as you LISTEN to Jesus as He explains the story: Your individual response to God’s Word will often dictate your child’s receptivity to God’s Word.

Little eyes are WATCHING YOU = the 1st example of who Jesus, is YOU! if your walk with Christ is casual & sloppy, dangerous example will be followed ☹

C. (R) Luke 8: 11 – 12 = ‘...the footpath’

1. The 1st group of soil represents the response that never has a chance to germinate.
2. Satan = the birds comes & prevents the msg from taking root in the heart.
3. Intensely painful picture = before this week I had never noticed the amount of abuse the seed takes. Outsiders birds + travelers literally tear up the seed.
4. Jesus says, “The seed is God’s word.” Indicating that there is nothing wrong with the quality of the seed; its opportunity to take root is lost because of external factors; abuse is very common in the local church.
 - a. Painful pictures = children abused by trusted clergy & lay leaders
 - b. Abuse abounds = individuals shunned b/c of a sin-reputation; choose to turn away.
 - c. Abuses w/in local congregation’s = painful statistics
 - i. 80% of seminary & Bible college graduates who enter ministry will leave the ministry w/in the 1st (5) yrs ☹
 - ii. 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failures, spiritual burnout, or contention in their churches.
 - iii. Unseen statistics are the families = spouses & children who blame God as a result of the poor behavior; that turn their back.

Harsh reality – with this 1st group of seed any opportunity for faith & salvation is lost; hearing the Gospel is the most that happens ☹

D. (R) Luke 8: 13 = ‘...the rocky soil’

1. The 2nd group of soil represents people who initially receive the msg w/joy; the reception is superficial, without roots, & when temptation comes, they fall.
2. The major point Jesus is trying to convey is that this belief is short-lived & unproductive because ‘trial dissolves superficial faith.’
3. Travesty of not having strong biblical roots has multiple implications:
 - a. @ the 1st sign of trouble poor economy + loss of a job + tragic loss of a loved one they doubt God & fall away; blaming their circumstances as evidence that if there is a God; He doesn’t care anyway ☹
 - b. Doubting God is serious business; allow me to clarify:
 - i. Notice in the story of Job, that he was not chastised by God for asking difficult questions; for feeling sorry for himself.
 - ii. Job was chastised for doubting God’s righteous character; Job was chastised for doubting God’s holy nature.

God has broad shoulder’s = He invites our questions about our circumstances; but it BREAKS His heart for us to question His divine character & holy nature!

What is missing in this 2nd group of seed is practical everyday experience in having your faith tested & God coming through ~ keeping His word!

INSERT George Shotwell’s death; wonderful man; give you the shirt off his back; he was the pilot for the governor of TN. His son called to tell me of his dad’s passing ~ we reminisced about our last mission’s trip together in the spring of 96.’
George Jr. was the governor’s pilot after his dad ~ saw radar; we were putting on a roof in the Appalachian Mtn.’s; blizzard – ice storm hit; gathered students & prayed; God your word says, “You will never leave nor forsake us” we need you today!
Eye-witnesses to a storm passing over our rustic house; George said, trip changed his life ~ been on multiple missions trips b/c of faith!!

E. (R) Luke 8: 14 = ‘...the seed that fell among the thorns’

1. This 3rd type of soil is the most dangerous & common in the local church.
2. This group of people receives God’s word, but they receive other things with the equal zeal; they pride themselves...
 - a. They pride themselves on keeping an open mind - - so open that they can keep nothing in it or out of it.
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3. Jesus says, the danger of such distraction is that the word is crowded out & choked off by the energy & priority given to these other concerns.

Well intentioned people who desire the things of God but have allowed other things to become more important than their relationship w/Jesus ☹

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Children with honest & good hearts = integrity that makes righteous decisions
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Children who patiently produce a large harvest of good in Jesus' name!
That's an immeasurable legacy!

II. (1) final observation

A. Did you notice the spiritual condition of each soil type = heart?

1. The spiritual condition of this 1st soil is clearly a picture of the unsaved ☹
2. The spiritual condition of the last soil type is also evident = clearly saved!
3. The problem enters with the unclear spiritual condition of the other two soil types; the outcome is less than clear - - I believe Jesus did this on purpose to remind us of the most important question of all:

What single type of response to God's word have I given? This is only about you for a moment:

B. If your answer is ANYTHING like the 1st (3) soils = my heart is like a...

1. 'a harden foot path'
2. 'superficial cover of earth over a thin layer of limestone - - no biblical roots'
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You are in a dangerous place spiritually & you need to reconsider & accept GOD'S WORD in Ezekiel 36: 26

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