

2/20/98 Women of Well-Being Conference at Atlanta Vineyard Christian Fellowship
Dr. Rick Petronella
“When Living Hurts”

Isa 42
Matt 13

Matthew 13:14-15, “You will be ever hearing, but never understanding. You will be ever seeing, but never perceiving. For the people’s heart has become callused. They hardly hear with their ears. They have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and I would heal them.”

What Christ is trying to describe to the disciples is, “How do they look at life?” “How do they understand God?” And “How do they understand themselves and others?”

When we talk about the callused heart that the lord is referring to, most people don’t have a callused heart because they are mean and horrible and just angry. But I function from the premise that I don’t look at anger as a primary emotion. I look at it as a secondary emotion or frankly as a very primitive emotion. I often look at hurt first. The steam coming off of hurt produces anger. If someone is treating just the anger, you’re missing the hurt, you’re missing the wound, the injury. When the injury is unattended to, you cannot do anything but mask the hurt temporarily which will cause those roots to reconnect. And as they do it produces bad fruit, which then of course keeps the anger going. So the callousness that the Lord is referring to isn’t judgment. It isn’t a disapproval of the Lord. The Lord is really declaring here - callus becomes pain; callus becomes a form of protection of the heart - of keeping you from hurting. Callus becomes a way of avoiding pain in the context of abandonment and future hurt and pain. Declarations or vows are often made whereby one would declare, “I will never again let anybody hurt me like this EVER!” And the essence of that becomes imputed in your subconscious state whereby a typical situation may cause emotion on a sadness, or whatever, you become so callused you can’t access that part of you. And that often becomes self preservation.

Matthew 13:20-23 have to do with the rocky places of the heart, the thorns, or the good soil. We often associate this with salvation. In my opinion, it has to do with the heart in regards to the preparation of where you’re at with the ability to emotionally connect. Rocky soil becomes issues of unresolve (almost a type of calcium deposit) that disallows roots to take place and grow very deep. And the rocks minimize the inability to produce the depth of roots that would cause the sweetest, fragrant, most delicious fruit. Those rocks are identified not as someone who wants to live just the ways of the world, but it has an awful lot to do with unresolved issues of pain, of woundedness, of agony, either of yesterday or in the present. But it becomes our issue. Don’t blame it on husbands. Don’t blame it on your kids. Don’t blame it on bosses or boyfriends or not being married or even God. Your heart must be evaluated. Your heart must take an inventory to recognize, “Are these rocks still there by virtue of what God would plant and very quickly dies?”

When we look at the type of issues associated with thorns, we talk about human weakness. What is human weakness in thorns? It’s the inability to trust. There is not one person here who has not been violated as some level or another. There’s not one in this room who has not been disappointed. There’s not one in this room who has not had issues of abandonment, minimization, or shame thrown at them at some level or another by parent or someone or even spouse or friend. The fact is, when those seeds become planted they produce thorns that choke out trust. Often times it’s a subconscious process that disallows us the ability to even recognize it’s happening. You can come forward and receive prayer and be ministered to and filled with God’s love and grace and no sooner get to the parking lot and on your way home and to where you’re headed and it starts to very quickly wilt and die by nature of subconscious vows, subconscious injury that has never been treated or dealt with - roots associated with depression, anxiety, disqualification, shame. All the kingdom of God, reality that He has for us, we somehow reduce it to humanness and then we blame God - if He’s real, why isn’t it lasting? So much of this comes from our past. So much of this comes from the environmental circumstances we’re living in now. And yet we fail to recognize it.

Verse 23, good soil, what are we hoping for? Produce what? Spiritual fruit, spiritual receptivity, true unadulterated forgiveness.

Psalms 139 says, "Search my heart, Oh God. And show me if there's any wicked thought in me. And lead me in the way of everlasting." The beauty of the Hebrew there with David, we miss it in the English translation. What he's talking about is this. David was a psalmist; he played the harp. He says, "Lord, show me the parts of me where You and I have become disconnected." There is a visualization of a harp. Then he says, "As You identify the parts of me that have become disconnected, let You and I reconnect them again together so that we can make beautiful music again." We miss that. Harmony. Melody. Celebration. Intimacy. Uniqueness -- all come in orchestration with what the Holy Spirit wants to do in the woundedness of a man after God's own heart who did not know where his anxiety was coming from.

Often times in the KJ translation, we miss out where it often says, "Show me where this wickedness comes from." The wickedness essentially is not wickedness, but KJ (16th century) often is associated with - if depression and anxiety were in the KJ's language at all, it had to do somewhat with demonic obsession. Well, it isn't. It's a reality, a symptom that can be treated and the Lord wants to heal. So by nature, taking the word wickedness out, we can very naturally and accurately replace it with depression and anxiety. "Show me where this depression is coming from Lord. I don't know where it's coming from." And that's a fair question. Open your heart and say, "God, I don't know where it's coming from. Help me. Free me."

When depression is denied, we bind it up and self-medicate in whatever form we act out. The KEY - recognize we're stuck (We need help); recognize areas of unresolve in our hearts (roots: generational roots; family of origin roots; life cycle roots; environmental circumstances). The inability to celebrate life. It's critical to know yourself. You deserve to be real.

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