

Learning to Listen to God

Jn 10:27 *"My sheep hear my voice... and they follow me"*

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Oct 3

Jesus was the Master Communicator. Even his enemies observed: *"Never man spake like this man."* (Jn 7:46) He often used parables or stories to connect with the people. In Mt 13 he shared 8 parables to help us grasp (understand) God's Kingdom. Hearing from God was so important that Jesus mentioned it by name 10 times in these stories. The first of these parables was so critical (Mk 4:13) that Jesus interpreted it for us. (Mt 13:18-23)

Matthew 13:18 *"Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower."*

- **The Sower (Messenger) Mt. 13:3** *"a sower went forth to sow"* (Plant)
- **The Seed (Message) Mt. 13:3,39** *"Is the word of God."* (See Lk 8:11)
- **The Soil (Vs 4-9; 18-23)** represents the condition (attitudes) of the hearts of the hearers and how these affect their response to the seed.

Last week we examined those who have become hardened to God's Word and are easily deceived (2 Cor. 4:4) or distracted such that God's word never penetrates & germinates in their hearts. Vs 4, 19

Today we'll examine how the seed that *"fell upon stony places,..."* (Mt 13:5)

represents: **The Disappointed (emotional) Hearer vs 5,6, 20**

A few inches below much of the Judean soil surface is a layer of limestone, blocking the roots from going very deep. This limits the plants to the surface water only.

"and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away."

The Disappointed (Emotional) Hearer:

1. Lacks a deep root system Mt 13:

A. Healthy root systems take time to develop.

1) Shallow roots often produce quick "growth." Vs 5,20,21

2) Strong growth requires deep roots.

- a) You must feed/water a Chinese bamboo for 4 years without any clear evidence of growth.
- b) These years are used to develop the roots system of the bamboo; Enabling it to grow 90 ft in the first 5 weeks of the 5th year!
- c) This is why the O.T. Law forbade harvesting the fruit for the first 3 years! (Lev. 19:23-25)
 - (1) The fruit from the 4th year belonged to God! (See Pr. 3:9,10)

B. Quick decisions are often based on Emotion. Vs 20,21 *"he that received the seed into stony places... is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it..."*

Yet hath he not root in himself; But (en) dureth for a while... and is offended"

1) Repentance requires a reprocessing of our thoughts when confronted with God's truth.

a) Repent: (metanoēō: to reconsider, re-think)

b) This involves a process, *not just a prayer*, involving our entire soul (*mind, will, and emotions*).

Lk 13:3,5 *"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* (apol'lymi: ruin, destruction.)

2) True repentance is hard (and Holy) work! (*Luke 3:8; Mt. 26:40-41; 1 Cor 9:24-27*)

Remember the old song "Take Time to be Holy" William Longstaff 1882

2. Plants without a good root system:

A. Can't withstand seasons of **drought** vs 6 *"when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away..."*

21 *"hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation (thlipsis: pressure) or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by (eventually) he is offended."*

1) Israel averages only 28 days of rain per year!

2) Drought means death unless the roots go deep!

a) You can tell a lot about the depth of your commitment during the dry/disappointing times.
2 Tim. 4:2 *"Be instant (ephis'tēmi: stand firm) in season and out of season."*

b) Droughts force the roots to go deeper! Ps 63:1-2; Ps. 119:71

B. Can't withstand **Storms!** Mt 13:21

1) A faith that can't be tested, Can't be **trusted!** (1 Pt. 1:7)

2) Jesus closed his first sermon with this truth. Mt 7:26-27

3) Storms reveal the type of foundation (root system) lying beneath the surface. (Mt. 7:24-29)

a) Problems (drought and storms) should draw us deeper in our faith and **fellowship** (see Heb. 10:25) helping us to develop stronger root systems.

b) The greatest Trees are found in the harshest environments. (Sequoias and Redwoods)

c) If we neglect our relationship with God in the easy times, we may find ourselves withering during the hard times. Jeremiah 12:5

C. Can't produce much fruit. Is. 61:1-3 *"that ye might be calls Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified!"*

1) What Glorifies God? Jn. 15:8 *"Herein is my Father glorified*

a) Fruit Glorifies God! *"...that ye bear much fruit;"* (Mt 5:16)

b) This is how we're identified with Him! (Mt 7:20;12:33; Jn 13:35; Gal. 5:22)

2) This is why we are **saved** (planted)! (Jn. 15:1-16; Luke 13:6-9; Mt 21:19)

3) The health of the roots (of our faith) affect:

a) The depth and breadth of our understanding! Eph 3:17-19 *"rooted and grounded in love..."*

b) The quality of the Fruits (effects or evidence) of our Faith. (Ps. 1; Gal. 5:22-23)

Conclusion: Puny roots produce puny (or no) fruit!

Most types of trees (plants) have two types of roots:

A Tap root (which goes deep) as well as Fibrous roots (usually shallow, tangled)

These illustrate the two critical dimensions of our spiritual roots.

1) We need to develop Deep tap roots in God's Word. (Ps.1)

2) We also need Interconnecting roots with God's Church (people). Heb. 10:25

We neglect either and both to our (and other's) peril!

Application:

Is. 61:1-2 *"That they might be called trees of Righteousness, ... That He might be glorified."*

Jn 15:3 *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit..."*

**Is God glorified by the growth or your roots
And by the quality of your fruits?**

*1. Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.*

*2. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.*

*3. Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;
And run not before Him, whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.*

*4. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.*

William Longstaff 1882

William Dunn Longstaff United Kingdom 1822-1894. Born at Sunderland, Durham, England, the son of a wealthy ship owner, he was a person of independent financial means. Although Longstaff had everything he desired, he still had an empty feeling in his life, and attended church one day and was inspired by words of a China missionary, Griffith John, on furlough to England, preaching at a service in Keswick, England, citing I Peter 1:16, "Be ye holy, for I am holy". That resulted in him giving his heart to the Lord and beginning a Christian life, dedicated to God. He became a generous philanthropist and was influential in evangelical circles. Following his friend, Rev Arthur A Rees, a persuasive Welsh preacher, who left the Anglican priesthood after disagreements with his rector and bishop, Dunn served as church treasurer for Ree's Bethesda Free Chapel in Sunderland. He married Joice Burlinson in 1853 and they had eight children: William, Hannah, Rhoda, Amelia, Ernest, Nora, Marnia, and Minnie. Longstaff befriended well-known evangelists, including William Booth of the Salvation Army, to whose work he generously contributed. Some of Langstaff's hymns were published in the Salvation Army magazine, "The War Cry" during the 1880s. He also financed Dwight Moody's evangelical crusades in England and Scotland when Moody's funding dried up after their financier died. During the crusade they preached to 20,000 people. Longstaff did not forget that first sermon he heard, and it prompted the writing of his hymn lyrics, which he later showed to Ira Sankey during their crusade. Sankey showed it to George Stebbins, who set it to music in 1882 during a revival in India. In 1881 Longstaff's wife died. He died at Sunderland, England.