Cultivation of Heart

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[Luke 8: 4-8, 11-15] And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 5 “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. 8 But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

11 “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13 But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. 14 Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

A human is a creature that is made up of body, soul, and spirit and the spirit resides within the soul. These three components are wholly integrated so that one affects the others. When a person’s soul leaves the body, the person is longer alive. A person’s soul consists of the mind and the heart. The mind is like the front yard of the soul and the heart is the central core of the soul. Within the heart, there are the person’s values, goals, motives, and affections that drive every decision of the person. Cultivation of the heart is one of the most important topics in the Bible and many parts of the scripture are devoted to this topic.

The parable of the sower and the seed is about the topic of what is cultivated and grown in the heart of every human being. And God expects to see godly fruits from the heart of every person. The harvest from one’s heart determines the eternal destiny of the person; those who produce godly fruits are rewarded with eternal life in heaven with God and those without such fruits are banished in eternal destruction just as tares are burned to ashes.

This parable expresses the following truths about our heart and its cultivation:

1) Our heart is like farming soil to a farmer. Things grow in it. And God wishes to plant and reap good fruits from our hearts and lives.

2) God plants good seeds of His truth in our hearts just as a farmer scatters seeds on his farm.

3) Satan takes away the good seeds from the soil that are exposed and not submerged in the soil just as birds eat the scattered seeds lying on hard ground.

4) The hardness of the heart is detrimental to the growth of God’s seed in our hearts just as rocky soil is not productive for crop growth.

5) Cares of life, riches, and pleasures of life choke the growth of the good seed just as thorns in a field prevent the growth of plants.

An important lesson buried in this parable is our responsibility of maintaining the condition of our hearts. Lord Jesus compared our heart to farm soil. Just as a farmer is devoted to the cultivation of his field, we also must be devoted to the cultivation of our hearts. Lord Jesus wanted His disciples to meditate on this parable because they wanted to know the meaning of it. To help their understanding, He explained the parable in verses 11-15. And He expected the disciples to further their search for the meaning of the parable. We can see much evidence that they did search for the meaning of heart cultivation extensively throughout the New Testament epistles written by the apostles.

A common misunderstanding that many Christians have about heart cultivation is that, since God is the grand farmer who spreads the seeds of His word on human hearts, He is responsible for ensuring the productive

 The important lesson for us today is to fully understand and accept our responsibilities in the cultivation of our hearts. So, here are the truths in this lesson:

1. We are farmers of our hearts working under God’s guidance and teaching. God has given us the mission of nurturing the good things and cultivating His good seeds in our hearts toward reaping the good fruits God desires to see from our life.
2. We are responsible for keeping the good condition of our hearts by removing hardness and preventing cares of life, craving for wealth, and enjoyment of earthly pleasures from inhibiting the proper and strong growth of God’s word in our hearts. We are daily responsible for this maintenance and nurturing work just as a farmer is devoted to ensuring his farm is free of debris, weeds, and rocks.

When we fail to accept the husbandry of our hearts, we are often persuaded to complain to God about the spiritual disasters of our life. When we experience a strong grievance against God, strife with our family or neighbors, a despondent depression that robs all strength to go on, and a wave of disbelief that robs peace and joy in our hearts, then we need to sit back and examine our hearts and do our part as a heart farmer, removing the hard rocks, thorns, rubbles, and weeds from our hearts. When we have done our due diligence on the condition of our hearts, then we will find our hearts in proper condition before God.

[Proverbs 4:23] Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

 When good things of God’s seed grow strong in our hearts, our mouths and actions will naturally show forth what is inside of our hearts through the words that we speak and our daily actions. Without our inward cultivation work, we cannot expect our outward life to show Christian holiness. Lord Jesus spoke this simple truth clearly before the hypocritical religious people of His day as follows.

[Matt 12:35] A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

“Our heavenly Father, we realize that You created us as spiritual creatures so that we can understand heavenly things and worship and love You with all our body, heart, and soul. We are thankful for the growth of Your truth in our hearts that give us peace, joy, and strength to live as Your children. We want to be diligent daily in our part of keeping our hearts pure and clean so that the seeds You have sown may yield a bounteous harvest that will please Your heart and bring honor and glory to Your name. In Christ’s name, Amen!”

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