LYRICAL DEVOTIONAL · DAY 153

What Determines Your Spiritual Growth

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"Those who were sown on the good soil
are the ones who hear the word
and accept it and bear fruit."
- Mk 4:20

Jesus is teaching
how the kingdom grows:
not by force,
but by the condition of the heart.

One seed.
Four outcomes.
Not because of the seed,
but because of the soil.

THE PATH
Hard.
Compacted.
Closed.
Ancient fields had narrow walkways
trampled by travelers, animals,
and years of repetition.
Soil beaten into a hard surface.
Seed could land,
but never sink. (Mt 13:19)
Birds watched for this-
and Jesus says the enemy does too.
A heart pressed flat
by disappointment and wounds
becomes a path
where truth can't enter.

THE ROCKY GROUND
Shallow.
Warm.

A thin layer of soil
spread over a hidden shelf of limestone.
This shallow soil heats quickly,
so the seed bursts upward with joy.
The warmth accelerates growth,
making the plant look strong,
promising,
alive.

But the same heat
that pushes the plant up
keeps the roots from going down.
Roots hit stone
before they find water.
(Mt 13:20-21)
There is no depth,
no moisture,
no endurance.

And this is the person Jesus describes:
the one who receives the word with joy,
responds quickly,
springs up beautifully,
but never lets the word
sink beneath the surface.

So when heat comes-
pressure,
trouble,
testing-
the joy that grew quickly
cannot survive.
It withers,
not because it was false,
but because it was shallow.

THE THORNS
Crowded.
Divided.
Overrun.
Thorns in Israel
had deep root systems.
Even when cut back,

they returned stronger.
The seed grows,
but so do the rivals- (Mt 13:22)
worry,
wealth,
want,
competing loves.

A divided heart
cannot bear fruit.

THE GOOD SOIL
Not perfect soil-
prepared soil.
Plowed to break hardness.
Cleared of stones.
Purged of thorns.
Opened to receive.
This heart hears,
holds,
and endures- (Mt 13:23)
long enough,
deep enough,
faithfully enough
to bear fruit
thirty,
sixty,
a hundredfold-
a harvest beyond
human possibility.

You may not know this about Jesus:
the seed is always good— growth depends on the ground.

The seed is always good.
But growth requires preparation:
hardness must be broken,
stones must be removed,
thorns must be cleared.
The condition of the soul
determines the growth of the seed.