

Sunday, June 16, 2013

The sown word and the quality of the soil (5)

3- Lusts and pleasures:

+ This type of thorn is **very dangerous, it grows fast, dominates the ground**, and consumes all its nutrients so it losses [the ground] its ability to produce good crops. No matter how much seeds we spread, they are choked as they fall on the ground.

+ It is difficult for the word of God to grow and bring fruits in the heart of any person who is enslaved to lust, such as: Those who are gluttonous and desire varieties of food...

Those who **surrender to sexual lusts so their minds and senses become polluted, their perception of others around them become distorted. They lose their judgment** and fall into animalistic behavior; they become **enslaved to their lust**, always prying on weak-willed people. Of course as they drink from this polluted swamp they become thirsty for more...

Those who **love earthly glory** and seek after it in every possible way and even **battle over it**. They are saddened and feel hurt when they don't have that glory...

Those who find **pleasure in mocking others** and enjoy **conversations that are full of ridicule and judgment** of others...

It is very difficult for the word of God to grow and bring fruits in the lives of those who are defeated by their lusts. **The thorns of lusts and pleasures completely choke the word** and prevent it from bringing fruit in their hearts regardless of how often they go to church and regularly listen to the word. Their ground is not fit for growing plants because of the thorns.

+ Therefore, in order to be guarded against these evil thorns, let's plant these beautiful verses within our hearts and meditate upon them regularly: ***"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lust"*** (Romans 13:14), ***"Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."*** (Galatians 5:24), ***"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart"*** (2 Timothy 2:22), ***"denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age"*** (Titus 2:12).

Fourth: Good ground:

+ First we need to understand that the **good ground cannot be good on its own, it needs a great effort on our part**. We may need to:

Guard it and surround it with a fence to protect it from being trampled underfoot...

Clean it continuously from rocks...

Care for it and be vigilant in cleaning it from the seeds of thorns **Plow** it regularly, **water** it, and **fertilize** it....

In general, the good ground is the fruit of strife and continuous labor just like **good hearts that are prepared to accept the word of God; they are also the product of spiritual strife, sincere repentance and continuous vigilance**.

+ This ground also **varies in how much it yields crop**. This may depend on **how fertile it is** and how much it reacts to the seed or how large is the planted patch or how much care and follow up it receives. In all cases, God always rejoices with the fruits, as the Bible teaches us: ***"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully"*** (2 Corinthians 9:6), ***"Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."*** (Galatians 6:7), ***"Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor."*** (1 Corinthians 3:8). It means that the level of fruition that was described by the Lord as thirty, sixty, and a hundred depends on how much we grow in our faithfulness and strife, the more we strife the more we bring fruit... **Everyone according to his/her labor!**

+ The Lord Jesus described the owner of this land with great characters, among them that he **listens, accepts, understands, keeps, patient, brings varieties of fruits with different qualities and quantities**.

Perhaps we need to pause and deeply contemplate upon these beautiful characters so that we measure ourselves against them and learn from them how to accept the divine word.

(To be continued)

Fr. Yohanna Naseef

fryohanna@hotmail.com

St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, Palatine, IL