

## What are the Rocks in the Parable of the Sower?

Mt 13:3-23 — I want to understand the things that are in the heart of man. The ground refers to the heart of man — the hard heart. The seed hits the ground, and it can't go down deep because of the hardness of the heart. The plant withers. We've seen it happen hundreds of times. For some reason the rocks were not removed. The parable can only be taken so far, but it helps us understand many things. What do we do to remove the rocks? It's keeping the seed from going down deep and bearing much fruit. Some translations say *rocks*, some say *stones*. What could they be? We've seen some people not really producing fruit. What could the rocks be that hinder the seed?

I want us to speak the many other words that the many who will come in need to hear. Peter told the many who cried out, "What must we do?" the many other words of what they had to do to be saved from this wicked and perverse generation. "How can we be free from the guilt of this blood?" He was probably talking to many of those who had yelled, "Crucify Him!" He was probably talking to many, many people, maybe even a million, but only 3000 repented.

Mt 27:25 — They all cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Of the 3000 perhaps many were from other places and might not have been there 50 days earlier. So I don't know how many of those 3000 had been there screaming, "Crucify Him!"

We have to do something to make sure there are no rocks in their hearts. If there are rocks in their hearts then the seed will only go into the heart a shallow depth, and not deep so as to produce the hundredfold fruit.

In Mt 13:9 and 13 it talks about their inability to hear. You can see the hard heart that some people walk in all the time. As soon as they hear the Word, Satan comes and takes it away. "Birds came and ate it up." Then it talks about Satan, doesn't it? At the very time we are talking to a person, the spirit of Satan comes to him, and the Word never goes into his heart. It may have landed there, and he may be convicted, but Satan

comes and steals it. Is it our fault, or is it the person's fault? "He failed to understand it."

Why didn't he understand it? Could it be that the gospel wasn't comprehensive?

*But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. (Mt 13:20-21)*

How many of those have we had? We had a person in Sus who was as happy as can be that he was saved; he was shouting, and sharing in the breaking of the bread, and then suddenly he was gone. It's essential for us that we'd preach the comprehensive gospel so that people can understand.

*Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. (Mt 13:22)*

Yes, worldly cares — we've seen many people like that.

*But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Mt 13:23)*

Can you imagine bearing a hundredfold? Can you imagine presenting a gospel that is so pure that it penetrates the hearts of people? There are people among us who are kind of in the same place for 30 or 40 years. And they don't leave; they are still with us, so maybe there is hope for them. But maybe they'll leave at the last minute because they don't have a deep root? John 15 says, "Prove to be My disciple by bearing much fruit."

With some people you think the best, you try to encourage them, but you don't really know whether they know our Master. When the times get rough, they'll probably leave. Children will turn their parents in, or parents turn their children in, just as our Master said (Mt 10:21).

Everyone has to hear the many other words. You can't just raise your hand and "only believe," and you are saved. We've had that happen and some were eventually

saved, and some weren't. In the beginning I don't know that we presented the whole gospel to anyone before they got saved. We were just learning.

*Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:37-38)*

They had heard the essential gospel, but they were by no means ready at that point to get baptized, any more than the jailer could have been saved without hearing the many other words (Acts 16:32). In Christianity you only hear that he was told to believe upon the name of the Sovereign "and you shall be saved." But they told him the many other words before they baptized him.

The seed has to go all the way into the fertile ground of the heart. Everyone says "Amen" when we bring them before the Body and let them give their testimony. But sometimes we see them leave after that. If they are still involved in the world or the cares and riches of the world, obviously they didn't repent. They are the ones who always question everything they hear, filtering it through their reasoning.

"What must I do to have eternal life?" the rich young ruler said. And our Master said those hard words to him. He wasn't afraid of offending him. If He hadn't said that he probably would have followed Him for a while.

Sho'er — If there was anything in our Master to love riches or to show partiality He could have compromised when speaking the truth to him. Later in the first edah they compromised. The truth our Master spoke to him showed that he didn't truly trust Him.

Emet — The words we speak have to enable a person to switch their trust — what they have trusted in all their life — to trusting us. Our God becomes their God of comfort. When you baptize someone, it encourages you when you see their continual thankfulness. Then when hard times come, neither tribulation nor distress nor death, like it talks about in Rom 8:35, can take that love away. If they don't get to that point, then when the sun comes out, that plant has nothing to feed on.

That's good. That's right. It withers because it dries up. It's the rocky soil. I think we can remove rocks out of people's souls now. There might be selfishness, or bitterness, or many things that might be a rock that keeps the seed from going down deep into the moist fertile soil.

*"... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead..." (Phil 3:10-13)*

By the time he was ready to die he said he had reached that goal:

*"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Tim 4:6-8)*

When there is resistance, maybe you could say, "There might be a rock there; maybe the seed didn't go down deep." I think we can apply it to that; we can talk to people and help them see what is hindering them. The sun causes the growth, but when the ground is hard or rocky it withers the plant.

What has persecution done for us? Well, Bob Pardon made us grow. It's amazing. We don't have eternal life unless we are persecuted. We don't enter the kingdom apart from persecution and affliction. Our Father uses Bob Pardon to really help us. If he were smart he would stop persecuting us. Through him we have grown a lot. Maybe we should tell him that.

Shebet — When there's pressure and persecution you grow more toward that life source, toward that water, and it also gives us proven character.

When we present the gospel of the kingdom, we must know that there might be rocks. Maybe we need to tell them that if they don't have joy maybe they have to find out

what the rocks are that inhibit the seed.

Almah and Baruchah were greatly tested. Baruchah's name used to be Rebecca. She was taken from us, put in a room, and treated terribly. You could see what was in her heart. It wasn't long before the sun came out and tested Baruchah and Almah — affliction, persecution — and it produced a marvelous fruit. I just want to use that as an example. We might not be personally persecuted, but we are in the Body. We are spoken evil of.

Mt 24:9-13 — Many will endure, and many will fall away. Right before we flee there is great persecution, and some can't stand it. Our Father has to test them. It might be the last straw that breaks the camel's back. I hate to say this — they are our brothers, but they don't make it. Anyway, you don't want those kinds of people in the wilderness who aren't going to make it.

In Yehudah people have gotten washed or baptized over and over again. I guess you have to keep on being baptized until you are really baptized, until the rocks are removed, the rock that kept the seed from sending down roots. The root doesn't go down deep. But we really have to emphasize the many other words. At least we'll have to learn. I don't want to carry it too far; I don't want to needlessly offend people. But our Master wasn't afraid to offend the rich young ruler, because certainly He would have had a false follower.

There are eight parables altogether concerning the gospel of the kingdom. We need to know and understand all these. Just read through all of Matthew 13 sometime. That will be beneficial for everyone. The Jews in the first century thought the kingdom would just be given to them. But it's going to be through great hardship, a great labor of love.

Haggai — Acts 2:37 — They were pierced to their heart. There was a place in their heart that they could hear and be saved. In Ezekiel it says, "I will remove your hard heart, and give you a heart of flesh." We still have hardness in our hearts. We need to be soft.

When I prepared my boy for Bar Mitzvah, we talked about circumcision. The Word makes that cut. It removes all that hinders us from hearing. The rock hinders the seed from putting down a root. I want to apply it to myself. The only article I ever wrote was about the hardness of heart I had in the world. When you are a child, you have a soft heart, and over time it hardens up.

I want to get rid of all the hardness that remains there. I want to look intently at the law of liberty. I'm thankful this is the New Covenant, that the law will be written on our hearts. Then persecution can come, the sun, anything. It reveals staying power — the power to stand until our Master comes back.

Shebet — We need to *hear* what He wants us to do before we can *do* what He wants us to do. So many times we can quench that pounding heart. We heard today that the heart is the soil. Home is where the heart is. We have to really understand that what's going on with our heart affects the whole Community, the whole Edah. It has to be worked out, dug out. Anyone who needs saving has those rocks that need to be removed.

How do we say those many other words? Do we speak the truth in love? Or do we just want another person to work in the bakery? People need to hear what they need to do before they can do it. Sometimes we are hindered from speaking the many other words. It's just so wonderful when we overcome to do that because love has been poured out into our hearts for that reason. But the voice of the evil one screams, "Shut up, you are talking too much." I hear something in my heart. I want to give that to my tribe.

Shomer — Emet said what we preach has to switch people's trust from whatever their trust was based on. It says, "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD" (Jer 17:5). Either people stay cold or they get hot. They might just be lukewarm if we don't preach the gospel. Sometimes we have the tendency to preach community, not really our Master. Then their life will be like a desert in the Community.

*"For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit." (Jer 17:8)*

They either trust in our Master, or they stay where they are. If we preach community they come in and they have a miserable life in the Community, so we can spare them that.

Underneath this house there's a lot of water, about four meters down. But before you can get there there's the bedrock. I think in my life I still have rocks. I don't think there's a soul without rocks. I don't know that it ultimately matters how much good soil you have on top of your rocks, but it matters that you'd let our Father take out the rocks.

Shoresh — Yonêq said we have to understand the parables. You can get the surface understanding. I could say I've understood what these parables say for 20 years. But if Yonêq says we need to understand them there must be a lot more to them. Our Master said in Mt 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." Right before that it talks about bearing fruit, it talks about false prophets. It talks about good trees and bad trees.

*Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' (verse 22)*

They had some other kind of justification system — they could prophesy, or do industry. Notice that they didn't say, "Didn't I encourage my brothers, love my brothers?"

The last part of James is like a parable (Jms 5:19-20). It's obvious when you save someone by going into a burning house. But if we don't do it in the spiritual realm it means that we hate our brother; we don't have the love of our Master. Love never fails, but a lot of times we fail to love our brothers and sisters.

Yônêq gave the example of Almah and Rebecca. They went through that testing, and obviously their commitment to our Master was sincere. I want to let people know that there will be great suffering, and it will only work if they totally give their lives to our Master. Our Father told Abraham his descendants would be slaves in Egypt for 430 years. America isn't even 400 years old. Our Father added this little parenthetical comment, "Oh, by the way, your descendants will be slaves for 430 years..." And Abraham went ahead anyway and sacrificed those animals. When I came into the Community, I heard someone had been laying down his life for 12 years, and I thought, "Wow, 12 years!" and I entrusted my life to those people.

It's really wonderful what you all shared. Our Father wants to take us another step, to another level. I really approved everything you shared.

Qashab — When people are drawn to us, and they start asking questions, sometimes you can sense things that you need to address, but something comes to us to hinder us from plowing up what's there. It's like you start

plowing and you hit rocks. If you didn't start plowing you would have never hit the rocks. We could have saved ourselves a lot of trouble in many cases if we had gone deeper, making sure that we had preached the comprehensive gospel with diligence.

Nun — We are all sowers. He wants us all to be response-able, able to respond. Our Father wants what's in the seed to reach its full potential. Our Master has an unhindered ability to love that can extract and pull away the things that choke. Obstacles and resistance — all that has to go. Our Father wants a nation that bears so much fruit. He wants us to be able to sow on fertile soil, and know what it takes to do that.

Israel of Asher — ha-êmeq was talking about “selfish” — how “ish” (man) became “self-ish.” If you're not loving, then how will you have the confidence to take the rocks out of anyone else's life? You are hindered. Our Father wants to get our attention and take the rocks out of our lives. The hope is that we would respond from the heart. “Didn't I do this, wasn't I responsible with the industry?” We'd better know what we're doing. People need to be saved. It's quite the responsibility to help others who, apart from that, will shrivel up and die. I want to help break the cycle of “self-ish.” Our Master came to deliver us from that.