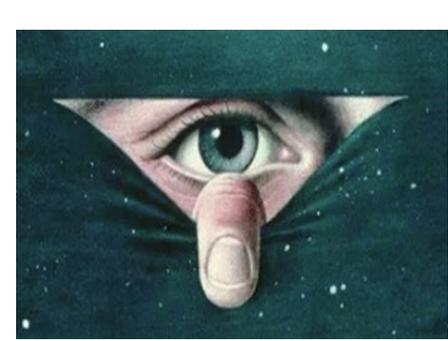


Gospel of Matthew

13:10-17

The Soil – Blessed / Unblessed 2





Vs 10 - The disciples have just heard the story of the soil, the seed, and the planter/sower. They were uncertain of its meaning, per usual, but they didn't really want to admit it to Jesus.

So they asked Him, in a round about way why He speaks to "*the people*" in parables (inferring that *the people* don't understand, rather than admitting that they, the disciples, didn't understand His parables either). But, truth be told, the disciples were most often befuddled as to the meaning of Jesus' stories.

They didn't get it then, but they would remember those stories, ponder them, discuss them amongst themselves and figure it out later. They would also be given the Holy Spirit of God to aid their discoveries of the deeper truths that Jesus had taught them.

But Jesus answered their question. than confronting the fact knew that His disciples did not know the meaning of His latest story, which, He told them that they were being given the “*secrets of the Kingdom*”



in those stories} but that the others were *not* being given those “secrets”. Why is that? Well because their hearts were not receptive, or not right. Jesus had just gotten done explaining that in His parable of the soil. The seed (the gospel) would only germinate and grow strong in “good soil”.

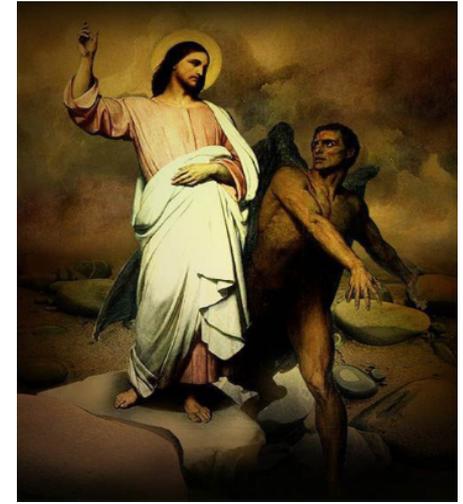
The soil preparation of a human being is something that God hold us responsible for. The truth grid we construct is our own. We made the decisions that made it. We decided what we would receive as truth and weave into our grid as a permanent fixture. So we own it. We are not “victims” of deceit, lies, and error. We *chose* to weave these poisonous strands into our grid based upon what it was we wanted at the time.

Somehow it served us, or we would have rejected it. *When someone accepts the premise that a baby inside the womb is not a human being, and that aborting the child is not murder, there are reasons behind this, whether it be that it is harangued on by their professors in college or is trendy with the friends they hang with, and they know intuitively that to go against the grain on this would get them kicked out of the group. Or, let's say, they or someone they love wants an abortion because they are not "emotionally, financially, or physically ready" for this child, so they must come up with a rationale for killing the baby so their life is not inconvenienced! It helps them to change the language. In their mind, a baby becomes a "fetus" that doesn't know anything, or have feelings, or know pain. It is a shapeless lump of organic matter that is no different than a tumor or a cyst and just as desirable. It is an unbelievably stupid, irrational, immoral and indefensible position to take, yet the majority of the western and eastern world take it! It serves them. It paints a false portrait based upon a truth grid full of falsehoods, lies and deceptions, but it is one they can live with, where they can sleep at night. It is like a portrait of argyle tiger. Of course there is no such thing in reality, but only in fantasy.



I could give examples well into next week of how we humans rationalize our acceptance of gross error and falsehood. We are supposed to be intelligent, rational beings, but when our every opinion is guided by the self-interest of the moment we are neither intelligent nor rational.

The Pharisees of Jesus day simply *could not* believe! It would have cost them everything! What they didn't see was that their decision to reject and persecute Jesus was in the long term definitely costing them everything, and I mean **EVERYTHING**, including their soul! *You've heard the expression "*sold their soul to The Devil*". This is a true assessment. Satan is the original liar and the Bible says he is "*the father of lies*" [Jn. 8:44,45]. It is through lies, falsehoods, deceptions, diversionary tactics that Satan secures a person's loyalty and they become His very own! They are able to, in their minds, turn right into wrong and wrong into right, and then are more passionate and aggressive about their convoluted sense of morality than the religious extremists are about *their* list of moral concerns and outrage! With more passion than thought, they do the work of Satan to convince and recruit others that it is in their self-interest to go along with the insanity and join the ranks of Satan's demented.



But God holds everyone responsible for how they construct their own truth grid. If they accept all kinds of faulty and erroneous information and false premises into their hearts and minds – so that they are “protected”, inoculated from actual truth of God - the gospel – that’s all on them! And Jesus says that even what strands of truth they may have will not help them. It is as if they have no truth at all! They have forsaken the light and gone dark, so God gives up – lets them go do what they want, no restraints – YET, holds the door open for the prodigals out there. We know that because some of us were there, and then came to Christ in faith.



[Romans 1:18-22, 24-34 (“*He gave them over*”)]

This passage is specifically about the pagan side of the human belief/ideology spectrum, more like today’s world. But there is the other side of the spectrum also – the religious rules and regulations, the legalisms, and the judgment, pride, and hypocrisy that go with it – more like what Jesus was encountering in Judea. Either extreme on the 1-10 scale could blind a person and stop up their ears to the gospel!

But people do this to themselves! This is not God doing this to them, and don't make the mistake of thinking that Jesus is saying that here! God gives the good news of the Gospel to both those that are indisposed to it's message (because of the truth grid they have created for themselves), and to those that are *disposed* to it (because of the truth grid **THEY** have created for **THEM**selves). He does not withhold the message from them! Even if He didn't want them to have it, He *doesn't have to* withhold it from them. They withhold it from themselves! This is the human tendency toward **SELF-DESTRUCTION** at its worst. At a soul's most crucial crossroads moment, it gets a message from it's life-giving Creator – the very one who breathed life into that soul and its body and its brain – and it turns away, unable to put forth a serious examination of the truth claims of Jesus Christ! In so doing – in rejecting Jesus – it has damned itself! **Vs. 13** - *“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing they do not hear or understand”* Jesus spoke in parables to those disposed toward unbelief because they wanted to **NOT** believe. So He would give them an excuse so they could do as they really wanted. You see, heaven is for those that want to be there. Realistically, should heaven be for those that don't really want it?

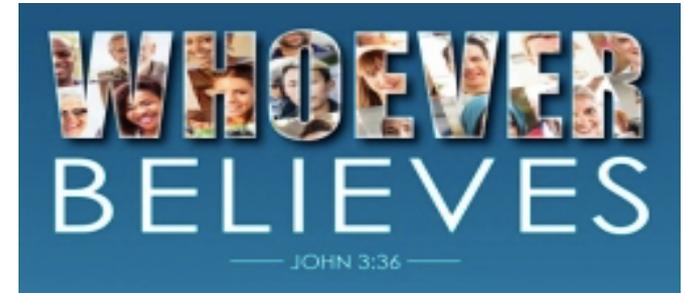


Those who would become disciples of Christ would go on to ponder the parables, sayings, and teaching of Jesus. Those who would not become the disciples of Jesus would ridicule His teachings, or turn around and forget about them as if they were not worth the effort. They would certainly not ponder them! It is a great crime in this universe to reject the kind and merciful entreaties of Almighty God! He throws you a lifeline to be rescued by Jesus from your sins and offenses to a Holy God. He's willing to put all your garbage on His perfect Son! Father, Son, and Holy Spirit went through unbelievable agonies to secure this for whoever is inclined, and then, you tell basically indicate to Him that, for whatever reason, you would prefer to make it on your own. But God has said you can't make it on your own! He's said you will drown without His lifeline! He ought to know. He's been doing this a long time!



Vs.15 - “*This people’s hearts have become calloused*”

John’s gospel chapter 6 records Jesus as saying that “*No one comes to Him unless the Father draws/enables them*” **Jn. 6:44.**



That is not an exclusionary statement, because God the Father had instituted and carried out His plan to give the Gospel of His Son, Jesus, *to the whole world!* He enabled everyone, making it possible for all. He promised that through belief, faith, and through receiving/welcoming Christ into our lives as Savior and Leader, (the One who we listen to/obey) – that He would apply the blood of Jesus to their sins, obliterating the condemnation and damnation they otherwise had coming to them! John clarifies this statement **Jn. 6:44** with **Jn 3:16** and **Jn. 12:32**

John 3:16 says that God so loved the world (a world jammed full of serious offenders) that “whoever” believes in Him would not perish but instead have eternal life! This is a vitally important clarification. It is not exclusionary, but all-inclusive. God drew ALL in Jesus! 9

Let me back that up with **John 12:32** – “*and if I am lifted up, I will draw all men (people) unto myself*”

John 3:14 – “*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.*”

This is a reference to the Old Testament story in Numbers 21, about the camp of the Israelites which had been invaded by a huge horde of poisonous (“fiery”) vipers. People were being bitten left and right, and to be bitten was a death sentence! But a brass snake was quickly cast and mounted upon a tall pole and carried around the camp. All people had to do was look upon the figure of the snake on the pole and they were healed/saved from certain death! Jesus was a figure of great pathos when He was lifted up upon the cross! The physical pain and suffocation, the emotional pain of betrayal and abandonment, the taking on of ugly human sin and then the judgment of His own Father as the the substitute/the scapegoat! This God did to ensure that you, and the next person, and the next person, and the next, without exception, could take advantage of His unbelievable kindness, generosity, and mercy – if they but *want to!*

