

REMOVING THE STONES FROM THE STONY GROUND

(Parable of the Sower)

(Grace Assembly - Kaikohe - 21/9/97 - EKB)

Reading: *Mk 4:5,6,16,17.*

1. **The main way God works in us, and through us, is by His Word.**
2. God has to sow His Word in our heart to produce a harvest.
3. We have to **know** the Word God gives
believe the Word God sows in our heart
confess the Word aloud
act on the Word
hold on to the Word.
These 5 constitute **Biblical Faith**.
4. If we will do this, then the Word God sows in our heart will develop in us, and produce much fruit.
5. But one of four things can happen to the Word God sows in our heart.
6. First it can fall on the **“hard footpath”** and be snatched away by the devil and lost. (See No 159).
7. Or it can fall on **stony, shallow soil**, where it grows a little and then dies, as the sun dries out the ground.
8. Thirdly, it can fall on **thorny ground** and grow a little before the thorns choke it.
9. Or fourthly, it can fall on **good, deep, clear soil**, where its roots grow deep, the stalk grows tall and bears much fruit.
10. Today we focus on **“the stony ground” where the soil is shallow**, and the stones prevent the development of deep roots.
11. In Jesus’ parable the heat of the sun equals times of testing, trial and hardship which arise **“BECAUSE OF THE WORD”!** *Mat 13:21, Ps 105:19, Pro 24:10.*
12. The plant has no ability to endure and soon dies.
13. So to be good soil we need to get rid of the stones.
14. In early Whangarei the land was full of rocks. The early settlers dug out the rocks, built stone fences with them and produced good, deep soil for crops.
15. Let’s identify some stones that possibly need to be removed from our hearts, so that God’s Word will bring forth much fruit in our lives.
16. The **“stone” of insecurity** is expecting that something big and bad might happen, e.g. fear of disaster, hurt, loss, rejection, failure or ridicule. In *Gen 37:5-11*, the Word of the Lord came to Joseph, that he was to be the leader and spiritual head of his family. God sowed His Word in his heart. When really bad things happened to him, *Gen 37:20,24,28,36*, he kept secure trust in God, always expecting God’s help, strength, blessing and goodness because the stone of insecurity had been removed, long before.

He prospered. He was blessed. He succeeded, *Gen 39:2,3,4*. Joseph expected the inevitable, supernatural, intervention of God. He was constantly expecting a miracle from God to meet his need. Amen! However the stone of insecurity in Jesus' disciples caused them to doubt and fear the worst. When the storm hit, the Word Jesus spoke in v35 died and they believed they were about to perish, *Mk 4:35-38*.

17. When Potiphar's wife tried and tried to get Joseph to lie with her he held his trust in God because the **stone of lust** had been removed from his heart, *Gen 39:7,10,12*. But it was not so with King David. When he saw Bathsheba, he took her, committed adultery and killed her husband, *2Sam 11:4,15,27*. This sin brought devastating judgment on him and his family.
18. **Lying is another stone**. Ananias and Sapphira, in *Ac 5:1-11*, came to the apostles with a bag of money. They said, "We sold a section of land and here is all the money!" In fact, they had only given a part of the money, and had kept back a part for themselves. The possibility of their fruitfulness ended at this point.
19. In some, **the stone of pride** prevents God's Word growing to bear fruit. The Pharisee in *Lk 18:9-14* was self-righteous and despised the tax collector who also had come to pray. "God knows the proud afar off", *Ps 138:6* and so He did not accept the Pharisee's prayers. His pride had turned God's face and blessing away, *Pro 6:16,17*.
20. In others, **unforgiveness** is a block to fruitfulness. God forgives us when we forgive others, *Mk 11:25,26*, otherwise He doesn't. We need forgiveness to be able to receive God's grace, *Heb 4:16*. Unforgiven sin separates us from God, *Is 59:2*, and His blessing.
21. Most of us have some work to do, to dig out the **stone of fear of witnessing** to others, about our faith in Christ. *Mat 10:32* says that if we do not confess Christ before men, then He will not confess us before the Father in heaven. If you need help, confess and renounce fear of witnessing, and claim the promises of God, that He will make you an effective witness for Him. E.g. *Mat 4:19, Lk 5:10, Ac 1:8, 2Tim 1:7*.
22. **Stealing** what belongs to someone else "is saying" that we are not trusting God to supply all our needs, as He has promised, *Phil 4:19, Ps 84:11*. One day a young man talked to his parents and told them he had been taking coins from his mother's purse. He had been reading God's Word and it had convicted him. God's Word is the way to get rid of stones.
23. There are many other "stones", beside these seven, to be removed from your heart. They must be removed if we are to be good soil, and bear much fruit for God.
24. **Faith in God's Word, and the power of the Holy Spirit**, breaks these rocks to pieces and gives us the power to cast them out and be free, *Ezk 36:25-27, Jn 8:31-36*. Confess, repent, believe God's Word, and receive God's release and freedom by faith in His promises, e.g. *Rom 6:1-14, Jer 23:29*.