

S. N. Feb. 7, 82 Am -

"HONEST HEARTED PEOPLE"

Luke 8:5

INTRODUCTION:

On a day such as the celebration that we are in the midst of, if a man doesn't know where he is going - there is no telling where he'll be when he gets there.!

I like the statement which Sam Jones once made, when somebody asked him, why don't you preach more (against) the Catholics. His answer was, "when I get through with the Methodists, it is bedtime.!"

We think when we get through with the Baptists, we have really fulfilled a great mission.

*Best Bedtime*

In considering 35 years, I read the other day about a new chain letter that was going around. And it reads something like this. This chain letter is meant to bring happiness and it will bring joy to you. Unlike other chain letters, it does not cost money. Just send a copy of this letter to six other churches, which are (tired) of their ministers.

Then bundle up your Pastor and send him to the church at the (bottom) of this list.

In one week you will receive (16,436) ministers. And one of them should be a dandy.

Have faith in this letter.

There was one hitch spelled out in the post script, it read --

P. S. One man (broke) the chain, and got his old preacher back.

Now that reminds me of a story sometime ago I told about Bob Terrell, of an unwanted ad. You know lots of people run ads in these little papers - and try to sell things that they feel they do not want. The paper there in Asheville had this ad one day -- For Sale. R. D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Phone 958 - after 7:00 P. M. And ask for Mrs. Kelley. Who lives with him cheap.

Obviously, there was a typographical error, somewhere in there. So the following day, this notice appeared in the paper. We regret having errored in R. D. Jones' ad yesterday. It should have read -- one sewing machine for sale, cheap. Phone 958 and ask for Mrs. Kelley. Who lives with him after 7:00 P. M.

The next day, this paragraph appeared in the paper, R. D. Jones had informed us that he has received several anonymous telephone calls because of the error we made in his classified ad yesterday. His ad stands corrected as follows -

For Sale, R. D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale - cheap. Phone 958 after 7:00 P. M. and ask for Mrs. Kelley who loves with him.

Finally, the following day - the paper carried this notice.

Notice, I, R. D. Jones, don't have a sewing machine for sale. I smashed the thing - and don't call 958 as the phone has been disconnected. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelley. Until yesterday, she was my housekeeper. But she quit.

Well, of course, there are a lot of things that change in the matter of time, and so forth, and so on. But in our congregation we have had some very honest hearted people. What I mean, down to earth, good Christian people. As I go back to those beginnings of my roots here in South Norfolk Baptist Church. Very honest, sincere, open-hearted people. And who have co-operated, and who have worked with, and have offered to help in services and in every way possible. I have been greatly helped and blessed by honest hearted people. And we have many of them in this congregation.

God is in the miracle business and in the book of Luke - Chapter 8. There are four kinds of people who are described. And I want to talk about those four kinds of people, and I want to finish up with my text. And when I am finished, I want you to tell me and tell yourself what kind of person you are. I think that is fair and I think that is honest. You do not have to tell anybody but yourself. But I am going to mention these four kinds of people that we have met through the years.

V. 5 - We read that this parable was one that Jesus shared with us - a sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside and was trodden down and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell on a rock - and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away. Because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns and the thorns sprang up with it. And others fell, on good ground, and sprang up and bear fruit a hundred fold. And when he had said these things he cried, he hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Now before Jesus, I point out these four kinds of people, and we see this in the parable - I want you to notice that in the last part of verse 8 - after Jesus gave this parable, he turned to the men and the women, that were there with him that day and he said, (he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.) Now why do you suppose the Lord added those words. After all, he looked at the men that were there - and the women, and they were outwardly listening. Why do you suppose that he added those words - he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

I believe Jesus spoke those words as probably we need to speak them often. We seem to be paying attention sometimes - but really we do not hear what is being said. A lot of people come to church but they never really hear a sermon. People open up a hymn book, but they never see the words that are in that song or hymn. And I am sure, there are people who come every Sunday - but they really do not hear. There may be some of us here tonight, but down through the years, I have noticed that those who have ears to hear, sit up and listen.

V. 5 - He says, a sower went out to sow some seed.

## I. HARD-HEARTED PEOPLE

Some seed fell on the wayside and was trodden down, and the fowl of the air devoured it. How do we understand such a saying.

V. 12 - We find an explanation here. The first type of person that Jesus is talking about. Those by the wayside, are those that hear, and then cometh the Devil and taketh the word out of their hearts. Lest they should believe and be saved.

So our first attention is called to the hard-hearted people. Notice what it says. Those by the wayside. Those that hear. But those people never come to that moment in their lives when they receive Jesus Christ.

Some go to church, some sing the hymns, some will join in the prayers, some will give their money, others will go through formalities. But the Word received is missing. They come, they hear, but they never make a commitment. They never ever receive the Lord, Jesus Christ, in their hearts.

The parable here is like that of people coming to church. They hear but they never receive. Now that is tragic to come to a beautiful sanctuary and hear beautiful music, singing about the Saviour, and then we open the Word of God - and then we walk out of this auditorium without ever receiving Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

Do you know that it is very dangerous to come to a meeting, and to hear the Word of God, and then to walk out. Because in Proverbs 29:1 - it says, he that being often

reproved, hardeneth his neck, and shall suddenly be destroyed. And that without remedy. <sup>11</sup> You could attend a meeting tonight, hear the singing, listen to the words, and enjoy the fellowship and walk away without inviting Jesus into your heart. That is very dangerous. Very dangerous!

I read about a situation in New York City many years ago that happened on the sidewalk. A lot of people were standing around and there was a lady who did not like what the preacher was saying - they were having an outdoor meeting. The preacher was talking about sin, and he probably touched her heart and she began to fight against the preacher. She started to scream at him; she shook her fists in his face - - - if you want to preach, go into the church, get off of the street, leave us alone out here on the street.

She mocked the preacher. She stepped off of the sidewalk to walk around the crowd that was standing there and a taxi-cab hit that woman and she died right in front of the Word of Life street meeting that was being held.

Somebody might say tonight - what are you trying to do, scare us? No, but I'm just trying to tell you the way things happen. I would rather scare you about the terrible place called hell than to let you just drift along and wake up one day in a lake of fire. Have you ever received Jesus into your heart? If you've never made that decision then you are a hard-hearted person.

## II. FAINTHEARTED PEOPLE

V. 6 - Some fell upon a rock. As soon as it was sprung up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. <sup>11</sup>

V. 13 - The explanation of verse 6. They on the rock are they, which when they hear, receive the word with joy and these have no root which, for a while, believe and in time of testing fall away. Well this is the second kind of individual - there's the ~~hard-hearted~~ and then there's the fainthearted.

V. 13 - It says, they on the rock are they, which when they hear, receive the word. How do we receive the word with joy? Do we know that there is joy that we receive the word. Who else could be happy in this confused, sin-sick, polluted world than those who have received Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you a question - Can you remember the day you were saved? I tell you, it had to be the happiest day of your life. I remember the day, the time when I was saved in revival meeting; and I went forward that night and I can remember when receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

We all love the invitation that's given in our church. We see people come down the aisle. They are joyful to receive the Lord. There is joy in coming to Jesus. Don't you like to be around a new Christian? They're always happy - they're always bubbling over. Can you remember when you were born into the family of God? That was the biggest moment of your life. Now there are a lot of decisions you make and commitments; but you said Lord, I'm going to get busy and I'm going to be a soul winner - I'm going to be involved in Sunday School - I'm going to live as you would want me to live.

Let me ask you the question now, maybe that was 3 or 4 years ago, maybe 20

maybe longer. What happened to all those commitments that you had back there? A lot of people go to church just to (get it over) with. But there is joy in being in God's house with God's people, singing hymns, hearing the Word, seeking the lost - that's something that we'll never forget. Have you lost the joy of your salvation - have you become one of the fainthearted people?

### III. HALF-HEARTED

V. 7 - And some fell among thorns and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

V. 14 - And that which fell among the thorns are they which when they have heard, go forth and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to perfection.

Now here is a third group we need to think about. It might be the largest group of people that we know anything about. They are the half-hearted group. If you will notice - and that which fell among the thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth.

Now I hope up to this moment, I am talking not about you, but I'm talking about those who have received the Word with joy; but here is an illustration that Jesus is giving - they allowed some thorns to come up in their lives.

What are the thorns? There are many of them and of course they are

mentioned in verse 14.

First, thorn number one - cares. And I look all over this auditorium Sunday after Sunday and I see very few people who do not have a problem, a care or a burden or a responsibility and I think that you would say the preacher is correct. Care is a thorn and sometimes it'll choke out the Word of God because it'll bring about discouragement to us if we had these disappointments. Satan comes along with these cares and responsibilities and frustrates and puts this thorn in your life.

The second thorn is riches. Now most of us sit back and well, praise God, that is no thorn in my life. If you knew how much money I had in the bank, you would not even talk to me about riches. I am going to talk to you about riches though because riches are right here in the Word of God.

One of the biggest problems we face today is the problem of money. There's nothing wrong with having money - would to God we had more rich christians that would use their money in the work of God around the world. There's nothing in the world wrong with being rich, but you know what the problem is - it's the desire for richness. Now great men of God sometimes have sold themselves for a little bit more of money.

I once was reading about a man who was talking about money - he says, I want to remind you, it's a funny thing about money, you never have enough. You always need a little bit more; and the more you get, the more you need; and the

more you need, the more you want; and the more you want, the more you get.

Mr. Rockefeller was the richest man in the world they say in his day and time. They asked him what is the one thing above everything else in life you desire - he thought for a moment - there is only one thing I want. They said, what is it Mr. Rockefeller.

He said, all I want is more.

Now some of you say well wait a minute. Don't you know money talks. Well, all it ever says to me is - so long pal, goodbye! Are you motivated by money, by how much money you can get. Sometimes people think of job offers in terms of money. I'm amazed sometimes at what some young people and older people too think about benefits. Of course, I'm concerned about that. We 're not in the business to see how much we're going to get but our concern ought to be -- how much can we give Jesus Christ our Lord and so we allow this thorn to come into our lives.

The third thorn is that of pleasure. Now if you were going to describe America, you would write pleasure mad. We said on Wednesday night that everybody is going someplace. Everybody is doing something and most people do not know where they are going, but it does not make a bit of difference. If it makes you happy, go ahead and do it - who cares. You cannot be with people 5 minutes without them telling you where they have been, where they are going - and everybody is going someplace and they are going pleasure mad and they'll tell you to get out of their way.

Unless God sends revival, America is finished because people have forgotten God and they desire their happiness out here in the world. But you're never going to find pleasure out here in the world - true pleasure is found in a person - the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now with unconverted people this is normal because they try to do this and they know what they're doing; that's the way they live - they're going to go on drugs, they're going to get into the sex scene and pervert things. But what confuses the church today is that the christian crowd wants to join that crowd.

Quite often you have people ask you can I do this, can I do the other. Well, they say everybody in the church is doing it and what we need to think about is, is this thing contrary to the Word of God. Is it wrong or is it right.

Christians need not sit around and say can we do this or ought we to do the other. What we ought to do is say how can we please the Lord Jesus Christ and lay aside all these things. They are important to us - we are not like the world going down in pleasure - seeking a good time.

We have a purpose in life, we have a race in life.

Now my point is, have you allowed some of these thorns to come into your life. You say I am not sure about that. Well, what happens to a person who hears the word of God and allows those thorns to come into his life.

The last part of verse 14, says, that a person brings no fruit to perfection. Did you lead anybody to the Lord Jesus Christ in the last week. Has there been any fruit in your life in the last month. Did you have an opportunity of going out and talking to somebody. Have you tried to do something for somebody. Any fruit in your life.

You say well preacher, I have had a tough week, it has been a tough month. Well, is there any fruit. Thorns choke out the Word of God. And they are fruitless people. We have a lot of fruitless Christians around today.

#### IV. THE HONEST HEARTED PEOPLE

Now in V. 8 - it says others fell on good ground, sprang up and bear 100 fold.

Look at V. 15 - that on the good ground, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it and bring forth fruit, with patience. Now this is the crowd that we call the honest hearted people.

That on the good ground, they who are in an honest and good heart. Having heard the Word.

See the next two words -- that is what the message is all about. If you do not have them underlined in your Bible, you ought to underline them. Having heard the Word, keep it. There is no sense hearing the Word of God and not keeping it.

I have met people, I love to go to South Norfolk Baptist Church - and they say, why do you like to go. They say because I know I am always going to hear the Word of God. I am going to get a message from the Bible.

Why hear if you do not keep - every man of God who is a pastor, who studies, who prays, who works all week long, and who stands up and delivers the Word of God - does not do that just to receive compliments from people. But, preaches that so that the congregation might go out and keep the Word.

What happens to the person who hears the Word of God and keeps the Word of God. V. 15 Read the last part of that. That person will bring forth fruit with patience. Isn't that easy to understand. You receive the Word of God. Now thorns will come and choke out the Word of God, and there will be no fruit. But you receive the Word of God, and you keep it, and you will produce fruit with patience to the Glory of God.

Now I know that we have had a lot of honest hearted people like this in this church. And that is why God has prospered and blessed this congregation. It is because they have had the Word planted in their hearts - and with patience, they have brought forth fruit. Unto His glorious holy name.

We might ask ourselves a question - am I in that honest hearted group. Well, you say, I know all about that hard hearted group, I know all about that faint hearted group, and I know all about that half hearted type. Now tell yourself where you are - just be honest with yourself. Now, I have no way of knowing what you have said to yourself. Who said, I tried to be honest hearted. The great adversary, the Devil, he wants to steal away and remove from us - even our salvation if we would listen to him.

And take it away from our faces and our souls, and our spirits.

Eddie Shuett, a missionary, went out and saw an elderly lady with all sorts of designs over her face in Africa. It was their custom to take stones and shells - and cut designs all over their faces, arms, legs, and bodies. And then they would put dirt in the cut and let them fester for months. And when they healed, there were those scars. They did that to make themselves beautiful. But they had never looked into the mirror to see themselves. They had no mirrors.

Can you imagine living in a society without mirrors. Do you remember, how you do the first thing in the morning - take a look.

Well, when this missionary went into the interior of Africa and saw all of this and said to one person, friend, you will have to forgive me - but you are the ugliest person that I have ever seen. And the person said, no, I am not ugly. I am beautiful.

So the missionary could not convince this one, and finally with the help of the mirror - he took out his mirror. Handed it over to the African who took the mirror and looked into it. He then believed the missionary. You know what he did - he took the mirror, threw it on the ground, and broke it. If I break the mirror - I will change what I have seen.

Well, here tonight, in the church we are looking in the mirror. Did you see yourself as hard hearted, faint hearted, half hearted, the honest hearted. Wouldn't it be wonderful tonight if every man and every woman said, Lord, from tonight on - I want to be that honest hearted person. Wouldn't that be great.

I would not believe there is a person here who would not want to be an honest hearted person. But if you are going to be the kind of people God wants us to be, for his honor and for his glory, then it only takes a moment of decision - a moment of committment when we humble ourselves before the Almighty God. And say, God, I am sorry for my past, but this moment I know that I have been standing in the wrong place and that I am going to take a step of faith. And by your grace, become a doer of the Word because I want to produce fruit for your glory.