

Northside Church of Christ

“God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
John 4:24



Seed And Soil

By Mike Riley

In farming or gardening, the productivity of seed is directly proportionate to the fertility of the soil it's sown in. Even if the seed is good, if it's planted in unfertile soil, it will either not germinate or will only produce a sickly and unproductive plant. And so it is with the word of God and human hearts.

In the “parable of the sower” (Luke 8:4-15; Matthew 13:1-9; Matthew 13:18-23), four kinds of soil are mentioned: (1) the wayside (Luke 8:5); (2) rocky places (Luke 8:6); (3) soil in which thorns are abundant (Luke 8:7), and (4) good soil (Luke 8:8). Each of these represents four different kinds of human hearts (cf. Luke 8:12; Luke 8:15; Matthew 13:15; Matthew 13:19), while the seed is called “the word of God” (Luke 8:11).

Please note that the deficiencies of the first three kinds of soil in this parable, do not cast reflection upon the innate power of the seed to produce life. The problem is in the soil – not in the seed.

We should never speak of the word of God as being powerless to convert men, because the potential to produce new life and change men's hearts is found in the word of God (see Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Peter 1:22-25).

Continued on next page ...

SUNDAY MORNING

Triple E
Edify, Exhort,
Evangelize
4 Square
8:30 AM

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Hebrews
9:30 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship Service
10:30 AM

WEDNESDAY NIGHT

Singing Night
7:00 PM

Northside Church of Christ
4217 Highway 39 N
Meridian, MS 39301

Place
Stamp
Here



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“Study to shew thyself
approved unto God, a
workman that needeth
not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word
of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15

Paying Taxes To Ungodly Governments

By Mike Riley

In the life of Jesus, the Pharisees and Sadducees would often seek to entrap Jesus with questions so as to destroy His influence as a teacher among the Jewish people. Matthew records one attempt to trap Him by the Pharisees (Matthew 22:15).

Note that they “took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.” The word “entangle” in the Greek, is the word, “pagideuo” which means “to ensnare, entrap,” like a bird caught in a hidden noose of thread. Thus, the Pharisees sent out their disciples along with the Herodians (Matthew 22:16).

Luke calls these emissaries, “spies which should feign themselves just men”. Their intent was to “take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor” (Luke 20:20).

The Herodians were a minor political, non-religious group, who were supporters of the Herodian regime. It galled the Pharisees to have to pay taxes to a foreign power like Rome, therefore they were enemies of the Herodians who naturally favored the Roman tax, since it was the means of their livelihood.

However, on this occasion, they joined hands with the Herodians, who would serve as witnesses to Herod, hopefully being able to say, “dare Jesus say that it was unlawful to pay tax to the Roman government.”

Hence, the setting for the baited question:

“Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” (Matthew 22:17).

Jesus perceived their wicked intent and their pretentious flattery, and knew that they asked the question to tempt Him. Nevertheless, He answers their question with such wisdom that they marvelled and left Him (Matthew 22:22).

His answer was simple – since the denarius had Caesar’s inscription on it, it belonged to Caesar; therefore, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Matthew 22:21).

Jesus taught that taxes were to be paid even to Rome, the most ungodly nation and government the world had ever known up to that time.

Today, we find ourselves under a similar ungodly government that uses our tax dollars to subsidize the murder of unborn infants and promotes the perverted immorality of homosexuality. Still, we are not excused from paying taxes (Romans 13:6-7).

Rest assured that worldly governments will be held responsible to God for their ungodly deeds (cf. Psalm 9:16-17; Psalm 75:1-8; Jeremiah 25:12-14; Jeremiah 50:29; Jeremiah 51:6; Daniel 2:21; Daniel 4:17).

Someone might ask, “Why doesn’t the “seed” (God’s word) always bring forth an abundant harvest? Simply because the “soil” (the mind, or heart of man), is not receptive to it or is encumbered with the “cares of this world” and the “pleasures of this life” (Matthew 13:22; Luke 8:14) . We can’t blame God for our lack of productivity, for the kind of soil we are has been our choice (note the word, “received” in the Matthew text (Matthew 13:20; Matthew 13:22-23).

What are the requirements of fertile soil (hearts)? Jesus tells us, “they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience,” (Luke 8:15). This writer believes there are still human beings with good hearts that want to “hear” the word of God, and “keep it.”

Dear reader, what “kind” of soil are you?

Announcements

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Prayer Requests This Week

- Pray for all those with ongoing health ailments

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Communion Preparation

- December - Rowell
- 2023 Sign up sheet is in foyer

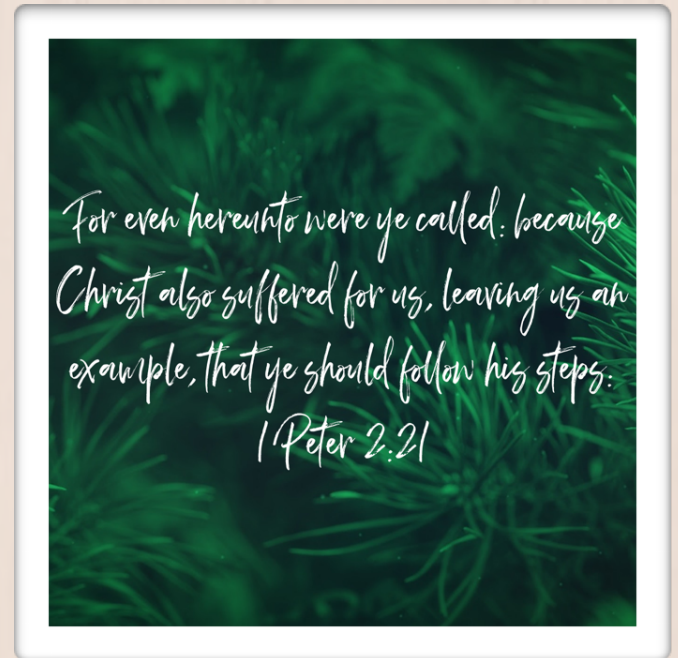
December Birthdays & Anniversary’s

- Connie Montgomery - 3rd • Crimson Rowell - 31st
- Rick Carlberg - 7th
- Dwight & Sandra Callens - 23rd

Every Sunday Morning

@ 8:00 AM

on WTOK-TV



Sermon Notes

Men to Serve

Announcements/Opening Prayer - Don Potts
 Scripture Reading - Luke 2:1 - 11
 Lead Singing - Chuck Rowell
 Head of Lord’s Table - Rick Carlberg
 Assist on Lord’s Table - Mark Potts
 Scripture Reading - Matthew 27:32 - 37
 Closing Prayer - Shay Cooper

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DirecTV	11
DirecTV	396
Dish Network	11
Over-the-air	11.3