

Wednesday, April 1st Bible Study Notes
Cedarville United Presbyterian Church Facebook Live
Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23

Check-In

- How are you feeling today? How is your self-care?
- Margie Donlon – psychiatrist, 24 ways to help ourselves during quarantine
 - Stick to a routine
 - Get outside at least once a day, while practicing social distancing
 - Stay hydrated and eat well
 - Develop a self-care toolkit
 - Give everyone the benefit of the doubt
 - Limit media
 - Find something you can control
 - Find lightness and humor in each day

Lower expectations and practice radical self-acceptance

- We are doing a lot of things in this moment, under fear and stress
- Lot of pressure to produce: “I will feel so bad if I *waste* this time”
- Lot of pressure to downplay the significance of what is happening: comparative suffering, downplay any anger, pain, sadness you are feeling
- We don’t have feel guilty if we don’t want to get our home improvement projects done, or if we can’t motivate our children, or we feel overwhelmed at times
- Give yourself what psychologists call “radical self-acceptance” – accepting everything about yourself, your current situation, and your life without question, blame, or pushback
- There is no precedent for this, and we are all truly doing the best we can in an impossible situation

Tonight...

- Parable = “to throw alongside,” comparison between known and unknown truth
- The Word of God is living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12), but the truth of God must take root in our hearts, be cultivated, and bear fruit
- Fruit includes holiness (Rom. 6:22), Christian character (Gal. 5:22–23), good works (Col. 1:10), winning others to Christ (Rom. 1:13), sharing what we have (Rom. 15:25–28), and praising God (Heb. 13:15).
- If a plant is to bear fruit, it must be rooted in soil and exposed to sunshine. In the parable, the sun represents persecution that comes because of the Word. Persecution helps believers grow. But the sunshine will kill a plant with no roots.

#1 – Path –

- When one hears the message but does not understand it, the devil snatches away the Word that was sown
- Large evangelism events – it's not about the ticket to heaven

#2 and #3 – Rocky Places and Among Thorns

- Both showed that the hearers had initial interest, but there was no genuine response or depth
- Rocky soil speaks of a person who hears the Word but falls away (literal Greek “offended”) when facing trouble for expressing interest
- Among thorns (worries and wealth) that choke it

#4 – Good Soil

- Crop that increased 100, 60, or 30 times what had been sown.
- The one who believes Jesus' word (hears the Word and understands it) will then receive and understand even more
- We try to cultivate that good soil in children, youth, and adults – Sunday school, Bible study, worship...time to ask questions, seek answers, etc.

How are we “good soil” right now given the reality of our world?

- Are we as receptive to scripture as we are to media?
- Are we letting anxiety choke us?
- Are we “offended” by the fact God does not promise us complete safety from harm or death here on earth?
- Can we embrace Romans 8:38-39, *“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
- What are we doing now to connect with God and stand on the rock vs. get mired down in quicksand?
- See “Stay-At-Home Services and Bible Studies” for various Bible study guides and prayer resources – find the line for yourself between overdoing it and feeling “guilty if I don't” and just distracting yourself with television, food, media, etc.

Resources I Used:

The NIV Life Application Study Bible
The Bible Knowledge Commentary
The Wiersbe Bible Commentary