

## The Root of the Righteous

Texts: Proverbs 12:3; Proverbs 12:12

### 1. THE ROOTLESS LIFE IS A FRUITLESS LIFE.

“A man shall not be established by wickedness...” (Proverbs 12:3a).

Too often we examine, admire and celebrate the fruit of great Christians such as D. L. Moody, Adoniram and Ann Judson, Charles Spurgeon or Amy Carmichael and forget to examine the root from which their fruit sprang.

A. W. Tozer said, “The bough that breaks off from the tree in a storm may bloom briefly and give to the unthinking passerby the impression that it is a healthy and fruitful branch, but its tender blossoms will soon perish and the bough itself wither and die. There is no lasting life apart from the root. Much that passes for Christianity today is the brief, bright effort of the severed branch to bring forth its fruit in its season. But the deep laws of life are against it. Preoccupation with appearances and a corresponding neglect of the out-of-sight root of true spiritual life are prophetic signs which go unheeded. Immediate “results” are all that matter, quick proofs of present success without a thought of next week or next year. Religious pragmatism is running wild among the orthodox. Truth is whatever works. If it gets results it is good. There is but one test for the religious leader: success. Everything is forgiven him except failure.”

In the parable of the sower (Mark 4:5, 6; Mark 4:16, 17), Jesus points out the dangers of seed sown on stony ground. Only a thin layer of earth covers the rock. Although it had enough soil to bring forth a plant, there was not enough soil to sustain life. The plant was no match for the scorching sun. With no root system, it withers and dies.

When Jesus was alone with His disciples, He explained the parable in greater detail. The rootless person liked what he heard. The promise of the Kingdom of God was a better life and eternal life. It sounded good - but there was not a surrender to the King of the Kingdom. Notice the wording of Jesus. They had “...no root in themselves...” Man cannot provide his own root system. I Corinthians 2:14: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

In Mark 11:13 and 14, Jesus cursed the fig tree. Mark 11:20 and 21 says: “And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.”

No root. No fruit.

### 2. THE ROOTLESS LIFE TRIES IN VAIN TO FIND ROOTS.

“The wicked desireth the net of evil men...” (Proverbs 12:12a). Desiring the “net of evil men,” is to covet the temporary prosperity of others, even to the point of admiring the way it was obtained, legally or illegally. The rootless will follow every get rich quick scheme or latest trend that is trending in hopes of finding the elusive dream, not discerning the actual ephemeral nature of happiness in the world outside of Christ.

The Psalmist was wrestling with the conspicuous prosperity of the wicked as we read the following verses: Psalm 73:3: "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." Psalm 73:5: "They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." Psalm 73:16,17: "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

Proverbs 5:4 chronicles the ending days of an immoral person: "But her end is bitter as wormwood." Then Proverbs 5:9 tells the consequences of one who follows immorality and indulgences: "Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel." When one loses his or her honor, all that is left is dishonor. The warning is clear - should you go that route, you give your best years to "...the cruel." The Hebrew intimates it is speaking of "a cruel one." When we contemplate this chilling statement, we call to mind that one of Lucifer's names is Apollyon (Revelation 9:11), which means destroyer. And this is the end of which the Psalmist was referring to in Psalm 73:17 and the wise man in Proverbs 5:11: "And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed." The end is coming. What a contrast to the end of the righteous! Ecclesiastes 7:1: "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth." Proverbs 4:18: "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

### 3. THE ROOTED LIFE IS UNASSAILABLE.

"...The root of the righteous shall not be moved" (Proverbs 12:3b). In Revelation 22:16b Christ said, "...I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Our Lord is identified in Revelation 5:5b as: "...the Lion of the Tribe of Juda, the Root of David." This is a wonderful revelation of the twofold nature of our Savior; He is Deity, the "Root of David," and He is Man, "...the Offspring of David." And our Lord brings us into the picture when He said in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." One can graduate from "nothing" or "no thing" to "all things" as Philippians 4:13 testifies, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Romans 11:16: "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches." The believer is established and grounded. "Rooted and built up in Him, and established..." (Colossians 2:7a). "...Rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17b). Psalm 46:1-5 promises us what Psalm 125:1 reaffirms: "They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever."

### 4. THE ROOTED LIFE REAPS BENEFITS IN THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT ONE TO COME.

"...The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit" (Proverbs 12:12b). John 15:16a: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...." John 6:27: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto

everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed.”

What a beautiful principle God gives us in Genesis 1:11 and 12: “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.” I Peter 1:23: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” We have been grafted into the family of God by grace and because of grace we boast only of Christ. Romans 11:18: “...thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.” I John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

When I contemplate the seed of the Word planted in my heart as a little child, I realize I did not have the full understanding of all that took place and I am still discovering who I am in Christ. I know this subjectively. As the pastor of the same church for nearly 40 years, I know this objectively as well. Visiting you in the hospital on the very day many of you were born allowed me to appreciate a miracle. Then seeing you receive Christ made me a witness of an even greater miracle. What a blessing to see that seed grow into the maturity of your faith spoken of in Psalm 1:3: “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” The rooted life will live beyond the grave. I Corinthians 15:38, 43b: “But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body... it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.” Philippians 3:20, 21: “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

-Pastor Pope-