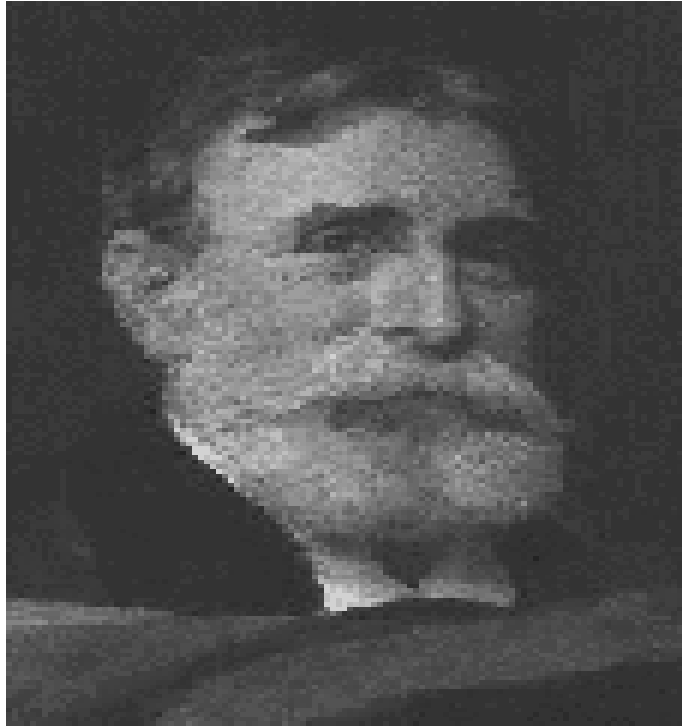


Bread & Wine



NOVEMBER 2007

BREAD & WINE

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Cover Picture: Our cover picture is that of B. B. Warfield (1851 – 1921), the last great Princeton theologian.

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Important Notice:

Commencing in January 2008, Bread & Wine will only be available as an online magazine on the Bethel Community Church website. All Bread & Wine issues are currently available online.

Editorial

Russ Atmore

We feature 2 articles by Benjamin Warfield, the great Princeton theologian. Gresham Machen commented that when Warfield died, it was as though Princeton died with him, and in a sense this was true. Warfield was born near Lexington, Kentucky on November 5, 1851. His parents were William and Mary Cabell (Breckinridge) Warfield, originally from Virginia and quite wealthy. His maternal grandfather was the Presbyterian preacher Robert Jefferson Breckinridge (1800-1871), the son of John Breckinridge, a former United States Senator and Attorney General. Warfield's uncle was John C. Breckinridge, the fourteenth Vice President of the United States, and a Confederate general in the American Civil War.

Warfield's education as a child was private. He entered Princeton University in 1868 and graduated in 1871 with high honors. During travels in Europe, Warfield who had studied mathematics and science in college, decided to study theology, surprising even many of his closest friends. He entered Princeton Seminary in 1873, in order to train for ministry as a Presbyterian minister. He graduated in 1876.

For a short time in 1876 he preached in Presbyterian churches in Concord, Kentucky and Dayton, Ohio as a "supply pastor" — the latter church calling him to be their ordained minister (which he politely refused). In late 1876 Warfield and his new wife moved to Germany where he studied under Ernst Luthardt and Franz Delitzsch. He was the assistant pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, Maryland for a short time, after which he became an instructor at Western Theological Seminary, which is now called Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He was ordained on April 26, 1879.

In 1881 Warfield wrote a joint article with A. A. Hodge on the inspiration of the Bible. It drew attention because of its scholarly and forceful defense of the inerrancy of the Bible. In many of his writings, Warfield attempted to demonstrate that the doctrine of

Biblical inerrancy was simply orthodox Christian teaching, and not merely a concept invented in the nineteenth century. His passion was to refute the liberal element within Presbyterianism and within Christianity at large.

In August of 1876 Warfield married Annie Pierce Kinkead. Soon afterward they visited Germany. During their time there, Annie was struck by lightning and was permanently paralyzed. Benjamin continued to care for her

until her death in 1915, managing to fit his work as a theologian with his role as caregiver. They had no children.

In 1887, Warfield was appointed to the Charles Hodge Chair at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he succeeded Hodge's son A. A. Hodge. He stayed there until his death. As the last conservative successor to Hodge to live prior to the re-organization of Princeton Seminary, Warfield is often regarded as the last of the Princeton theologians.

Warfield was an avid student of the Westminster standards, having a great appreciation and love for the Shorter Catechism. He made a great comment on Calvinism when he said, "*Calvinism is just religion in its purity. We have only, therefore, to conceive of religion in its purity, and that is Calvinism*". (Selected Shorter Writings, I, p. 389)

There are lessons to learn from Warfield's fidelity to Holy Scripture. His work on the Inspiration of Scripture is still the pre-eminent work on that subject. There remains much to learn from Warfield.

As usual we feature our Bible Quiz which will require some thinking. No use of a concordance is permitted for those who would like to test their skill.

Soli Deo Gloria

Christ in Us - Our Hope of Glory

Russ Atmore

The Christian life and experience cannot be lived vicariously. This means that you cannot live the Christian life by clinging to the coattails of another Christian, nor can you live your spiritual life through someone else. Nobody lives your life but you. Reading your Bible with your spouse or children is no substitute for reading the Bible on your own. Praying with others is no substitute for praying alone before God. These activities are important, but they do not replace your personal responsibility towards God.

There are many, however, who think like this and live like this. At best, it teaches dependence on the practice or the other person(s), but not on God and in God. It is necessary, but personal relationship is between you and God. We do not live our marriages through someone else (that would be considered adultery – either in the mind or in the body), but our relationship is only with our respective spouses. The same applies to children and even to all other relationships.

The same can be said of corporate worship and private worship. It is biblical to worship God corporately – God requires it, but God also requires personal worship. To neglect either one is wrong. Corporate worship is essential and personal worship is essential. Corporate worship is necessary in the life of the Christian. Personal worship can never take the place of corporate worship. When the church gathers together, heaven itself is engaged in worship led by Jesus Himself (Heb. 12:18 – 29). There is no reason to absent oneself from Church unless physically laid up in bed due to serious illness, otherwise hard effort must be engaged in to come and meet with God's people, because that is where Jesus is.

Any responsibility or duty requires effort, diligence and habit. Philip Henry said, "*Be sure you look to your secret duty; keep that up, whatever you do; the soul cannot prosper in the neglect of it. Apostasy generally begins at the closet door.*" Many of us attempt to live our Christian lives without the Lord Jesus Christ. It cannot

be done. We need direction and wisdom to live as the Lord desires. God has provided this through the means of grace – the Bible, prayer, and the Lord's Supper.

Observation of these is essential to fruitful Christianity and effectiveness in life. Is it possible to share Christ genuinely with others, if our lives are undisciplined in the things of Christ? Some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, others out of goodwill. Some preach Him out of selfish ambition without sincerity and with false motives – cf. Phil. 1:15 - 18. We want to live Christ and proclaim Christ in every area of life for the glory of God.

The truth of the indwelling Christ and His power in us and through us is one that we must grasp with heart and soul. To live Christ is life – true life. Do we feed on Jesus as He has asked us to? Do we submit gladly and willingly to His will? Do we meditate on the riches of God’s Word letting them soak into us? Are we motivated by love to Christ and for Christ? Are we concerned for the perishing of this world? Let Christ live His life in you this week. Man’s highest end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Are we bringing glory to God through obedience and are we enjoying God day by day? Jesus is the hope of glory.

“Christ is lovely, Christ is very lovely, Christ is most lovely, Christ is always lovely, Christ is altogether lovely.”

Thomas Brooks

Authority, Intellect and Heart¹

B.B. Warfield

The exact nature of the intimate relation between religion and theology is not always perceived. Sometimes religion is made the direct product of theology; more frequently theology is conceived as directly based on religion. The truth is that while they react continually upon each other, neither is the creation of the other. They are parallel products of the same body of truths in different spheres. Religion is the name we give to religious life; theology is the name we give to the systematized body of religious thought. Neither is the product of the other, but both are products of religious truth, operative in the two spheres of life and thought. Neither can exist without the other. No one but a religious man can be a true theologian. No one can live religiously who is innocent of all theological conceptions. Man is a unit; and the religious truth which impinges upon him must affect him in all his activities, or in none. But it is in their common cause-religious truth-that religion and theology find their deepest connection. The truth concerning God, his nature, his will, his purposes is the fundamental fact upon which both religion and theology rest. The truth of God is, therefore, the greatest thing on earth. On it rest our faith, our hope, and our love. Through it we are converted and sanctified. On it depends all our religion, as well as all our theology.

There are three media or channels through which the truth of God is brought to man and made his possession, that it may affect his life and so make him religious, or that it may be systematized in his thinking and so issue in a theology. These three media or channels of communication may be enumerated briefly as authority, the intellect, and the heart. They are not so related to one another that any one of them may be depended upon to the exclusion of the others. In any sound religion and in any true religious thinking, that is theology, all three must be engaged, and

¹ The following short essay was originally published in The Presbyterian Messenger, Jan. 30, 1896, p. 7 f.

must work harmoniously together as the proximate sources of our religion and of our knowledge. The exaltation of any one of the three to the relative exclusion of the others will, therefore, mar our religious life and our religious thought alike, and make both one-sided and deformed. We cannot have a symmetrical religious life or a true theology except through the perfect interaction of all three sources of communication of the truth.

It may, indeed, be plausibly pleaded that the three reduce ultimately to one; and this one channel of truth may, with almost equal plausibility-, be found in each of the three in turn. Thus it may be urged that our confidence in the processes of our intellects and in the deliverances of our feelings, rests ultimately on the trustworthiness of God; so that, after all, authority is the sole source of our information concerning God. We know only what and as God tells us. Similarly it may be argued that all the dicta of authority are addressed to the intellect, which, also, is the sole instrument for ascertaining the implications of the feelings; so that all our sources of knowledge reduce at last to this one source--the intellect. We know only what our intellect grasps and formulates for us. Still again, it may be contended that not the logical reason but the facts of life, our upward strivings, our feelings of dependence and responsibility, supply the points of contact between us and God, without which all the thunders of authority and all the excursions of thought into the realm of divine things, would be as unintelligible to us and as inoperative upon us as a babbling of colors would be to a blind man. There is truth in each of these representations; but they do not avail to show that we have but one means of access to divine things, but rather emphasize the fact that the three sources so interlace and interact that one may not be exaggerated to the exclusion of the others as our sole channel of knowledge concerning God and divine things.

The exaggeration of the principle of authority to the discrediting of the others would cast us into traditionalism, and would ultimately deliver us bound hand and foot to the irresponsible dogmatism of a privileged caste. This is the pathway which has been trodden by the Church of Rome, and we have as the result a nerveless submission to the dicta, first of an infallible church, then of an infallible class, and lastly of an infallible person. Here neither the

heart nor the intellect is permitted to speak in the presence of lordly authority; but men are commanded docilely to receive, on authority alone, even what contradicts their most primary intuitions (as in the doctrine of transubstantiation) or what outrages their most intimate feelings (as in the use of indulgences).

The exaggeration of the principle of intellect to the discrediting of the others would bring us to rationalism, and leave us helplessly in the grasp of the merely logical understanding. This pathway has been followed by the rationalists, and we have as the result any number of a priori systems built up on the sole credit of the reasoning faculty. Here neither revelation nor the conscience is permitted to raise a protest against the chill processes of intellectual formulae, but all things are reconstructed at the bidding of a priori fancies, and men are required to reject as false all for which they have not a demonstration ready even though God has spoken to assert its truth (as in the doctrine of the Trinity) or the heart rises up and answers, I have felt (as in original sin).

The exaggeration of the principle of the heart to the discrediting of the others would throw us into mysticism, and deliver us over to the deceitfulness of the currents of feeling which flow up and down in our souls. This pathway has been traveled by the mystics, and we have as the result the clash of rival revelations, and the deification of the most morbid of human imaginations. Here neither the objective truth of a revealed word nor adherence to rational thinking is allowed to check the wild dreaming of a soul that fancies itself divine, or the confusion of our weakest sentiments with the strong voice of God; and men are forbidden to clarify their crude fancies by right reason (as in the doctrine of absorption in God), or to believe God's own testimony to his real nature (as with reference to his personality).

Thus authority, when pressed beyond its mark and becoming traditionalism, intellect when puffed up into rationalism, and the heart when swamped in mysticism, alike illustrate the danger of one-sided construction. Authority, intellect, and the heart are the three sides of the triangle of truth. How they interact is observable in any concrete instance of their operation. Authority, in the

Scriptures, furnishes the matter which is received in the intellect and operates on the heart. The revelations of the Scriptures do not terminate upon the intellect. They were not given merely to enlighten the mind. They were given through the intellect to beautify the life. They terminate on the heart. Again, they do not, in affecting the heart, leave the intellect untouched. They cannot be fully understood by the intellect, acting alone. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. They must first convert the soul before they are fully comprehended by the intellect. Only as they are lived are they understood. Hence the phrase, "Believe that you may understand," has its fullest validity. No man can intellectually grasp the full meaning of the revelations of authority, save as the result of an experience of their power in life. Hence, that the truths concerning divine things may be so comprehended that they may unite with a true system of divine truth, they must be: first, revealed in an authoritative word; second, experienced in a holy heart; and third, formulated by a sanctified intellect.

Only as these three unite, then, can we have a true theology. And equally, that these same truths may be so received that they beget in us a living religion, they must be: first, revealed in an authoritative word; second, apprehended by a sound intellect; and third, experienced in an instructed heart. Only as the three unite, then, can we have a vital religion.

“Let us never forget that the message of the Bible is addressed primarily to the mind, to the understanding.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The Fundamental Significance of the Lord’s Supper²

B. B. Warfield

The most salient fact connected with the institution of the Lord's Supper is, of course, that this took place at, or, to be more specific, in the midst of, the Passover Meal. It was 'while they were eating' the Passover meal, that Jesus, having taken up a loaf and blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples (Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22). This was, assuredly, no accident. As the time of his offering up drew near, the indications thicken of the most extreme care on the part of our Lord in the ordering of every event: and these indications are least of all lacking with respect to this Passover (Matt. xxvi. 2; Luke xxii. 8; Mark xiv. 13 if.; Luke xxii f.), which he himself tells us he had earnestly desired to eat with his disciples before he suffered (Luke xxii. 15). We must certainly presume that all that our Lord did at this meal was in execution of a thoroughly detailed plan of action, formed in the clear light of the whole future (Luke xxii. 16, 18, 30; John xiii. 1, 3, 11, 18, 19, 21, 27; Matt. xxvi. 31; Luke xxii. 31, 37, etc.). Nothing can be more certain than that he deliberately chose the Passover Meal for the institution of the sacrament of his body and blood.

The appropriateness of this selection becomes apparent the moment we consider the similarities between the two ordinances. These lie in part upon the surface. Both, for example, are feasts, religious feasts, religious feasts in which the devotional life of Jews and Christians respectively to a large extent center. They penetrate, however, also in part very much below the surface. The central feature of both, for example, is eating a symbol of Jesus Christ himself. The typical character of the Paschal lamb certainly cannot be doubted by any reader of

² from Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 1, Edited by John E. Meeter, published by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1970.

the New Testament (John i. 20, 19, 36; 1 Cor. V. 7; 1 Peter 1. 19; Rev. v.6, 12; vii. 14; xii. 11; xiii. 8 et passim): the lamb that was slain and lay on the table at this

feast was just the typical representative of the Lamb that had been slain from the foundation of the world and in whose hands is the Book of Life. The bread and wine of which we partake at the Lord's table are in like manner, according to our Lord's precise declaration, the representations of his body and blood -- his body given, his blood poured out for us. What is done in the two feasts is therefore precisely the same thing: Jesus Christ is symbolically fed upon in both. This close similarity between the two feasts again certainly cannot be looked upon as accidental. We must assuredly judge that our Lord, in instituting the Supper, meant to make it to the full extent to which these similarities point, a replica of the Passover. In this sense at least the Lord's Supper is the Christian Passover Meal. It takes, and was intended to take, in the Christian Church, the place which the Passover occupied in the Jewish Church. It is the Christian substitute for the Passover.

Even this, however, does not do full justice to the relation between the two. If in the light of the broad facts suggested rather than recited in what has been said, we seek to go back in imagination to that upper chamber, and to realize exactly what Jesus did when he took the bread and wine and gave them to his disciples to eat and drink in remembrance of him, we shall not fail to perceive that it is almost as inadequate to say merely that the Lord's Supper was instituted as the substitute for the Passover as to say merely that it was instituted at the Passover. It is not something entirely different from the Passover -- or even wholly separate from it -- now put into its place, to be celebrated by Christians instead of it. It is much rather only a new form given to the Passover, for the continuance of its essential substance through all time. Precisely what our Lord appears to have done was so to change the symbols which represented his sacrificed Person in the feast, as to adapt it to the new conditions of the Kingdom as now introduced by him, and thus to perpetuate it throughout the new dispensation. The lamb had hitherto been the symbol of the great coming Sacrifice; but as they sat about the table and ate, Jesus solemnly took up a loaf and breaking it gave it to his disciples and said: "Take, eat: this is my body that is given for you." Many thoughts, many feelings may have crowded in on his disciples' minds as he spoke. There was much they may not have understood; much which, half understanding, they may have half revolted from. But there was

one thing that, however dimly, they can scarcely have failed to catch a glimmering of: their Master was identifying himself with the Paschal Lamb, and he was appointing to them a new symbol in its stead. For was not that lamb what had been given for them, the symbol and seal of their redemption? And was he not speaking of himself as given for them, and appointing the bread and wine as the symbols of himself? We may be sure there were searchings of heart that night as to what these things might mean: gropings no doubt in the darkness: but not gropings altogether without a clue or in a darkness unilluminated by a single beam.

The reason why Christ made a change in the symbols representative of his sacrificed self is obvious enough. He to whom all the Paschal lambs from the beginning had been pointing, was about to be offered up. The old things were passing away: behold, all things were to become new. As he was in no doubt as to his approaching death or rather as he was in the act of preparing for the death he was himself to accomplish for sinners: so he was in no doubt as to the approaching dissolution of the Jewish state, and the cessation of the ritual law, and with it of the sacrifices which that law prescribed. But not only was it appropriate that the new epoch in the Kingdom of God that was about to dawn should be marked by a change in ritual; it was necessary that the change introduced should follow on some such lines as those our Lord was actually giving it. The Temple sacrifices were to cease; there were to be no longer sacrificed lambs available for the Passover festival. There is accordingly no lamb in the Jewish Passover today while yet there remains the symbol of the Lamb in the Christian Passover: they have no altar, but we have an altar of which they have no right to eat. The new dispensation was to be universal: it was needful that its central act of worship should not imply a central place of worship and be bound to it: the day has come when neither in Jerusalem nor in any other special place should men worship God, but everywhere in spirit and in truth. Above all, the true Lamb to which all the Paschal lambs had pointed was at length to be offered up; fulfilled in the antitype it would be indecorous to offer up longer the types. Thus the change that was made in the chosen symbols of the great sacrifice needed to have regard at once to the closing of the old dispensation of typical sacrifices, to the opening of the new dispensation of universal

spiritual worship, and to the passing away of the type in the antitype. All this was beautifully provided for when Jesus, even as they ate the last Paschal lamb, took the bread and wine that lay before him, and, with the unmistakable emphasis of contrast, said "This is my body given for you"; "This is my blood of the covenant poured out for you." Whatever his disciples missed in their wonder at the new things that were so mysteriously and so rapidly crowding upon them, we may be sure they did not miss this: that in some way the Master was transforming the Passover for them and giving them not indeed a new symbolism for it but new symbols in it.

The really palmary fact for the understanding of the Lord's Supper thus clearly emerges. The Lord's Supper in its fundamental significance is just what the Passover Meal was: the symbols are changed, the substance remains the same. It is not necessary for our present purpose to determine the precise nature of the Passover offering -- whether, for example, it was a special, or rather the culminating instance of a sin-offering, differing from other sin-offerings only in the adjunction to it of a sacrificial feast; or whether, just because of the inclusion of this feast, it was, not technically a sin-offering at all, but rather what is generally called a peace-offering. After all, the distinction is merely a matter of distribution of emphasis. Every bloody offering was peculiar: and the peace-offering differed from the sin-offering only by the adjunction of an additional conception. Whether we call it a peculiar and more complete form of the sin-offering, or rather a peace-offering, therefore, the two ideas of expiation and communion are alike inexpugnably imbedded in the very substance of the Passover sacrifice. The meal which succeeded the sacrifice in any case owed its significance to its relation to the sacrifice. The victim offered was the material of the meal, and the idea of expiation was therefore fundamental to it -- it was a feast of death. But, on the other hand, just because it was a festive meal, it in any case also celebrated rather the effects than the fact of this death -- it was a feast of life.

Further than is obviously implied in this, it seems also unnecessary for us just now to inquire into the precise meaning of a sacrificial feast. Its general law is laid down by the Apostle Paul

in the tenth chapter of First Corinthians: and despite some difficulties that hang over the exact exposition of some of his phrases, certain broad outlines are plain enough. Assuredly, for example, the sacrificial feast is not a repetition of the sacrifice; and equally certainly it is something more than a mere commemoration of the sacrifice: it is specifically a part of the sacrifice, and more particularly this part -- the application of it.

Every one who partook of the sacrificial feast, had "communion with the altar." All that may be implied in this we do not stop now to discuss: this much it is allowed on all hands to imply -- those who ate of the sacrificed victim became thereby participants in the benefits attained by the sacrifice. Only one or two of the household, perchance, bore the Paschal lamb to the Temple and were engaged in its sacrificial slaying: all those who partook of the feast, however, were alike the offerers of the sacrifice and its beneficiaries. This is the fundamental law of the sacrificial feast perfectly understood by our Lord's first disciples, who had been bred under a sacrificial dispensation and instinctively felt its implications, but needing to be kept with some effort carefully in mind by us to whom these things are strange and without natural significance.

Precisely what our Lord did therefore, when at the last Passover he changed the symbols by which he was represented -- he, the true Passover, the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world -- was to establish a perpetual sacrificial feast, under universal forms, capable of observation everywhere and at all times, and to command it to be celebrated as a proclamation of his death "till he came." All who partake of this bread and wine, the appointed symbols of his body and blood, therefore, are symbolically partaking of the victim offered on the altar of the cross, and are by this act professing themselves offerers of the sacrifice and seeking to become beneficiaries of it. That is the fundamental significance of the Lord's Supper. Whenever the Lord's Supper is spread before us we are invited to take our place at the sacrificial feast, the substance of which is the flesh and blood of the victim which has been sacrificed once for all at Calvary; and as we eat these in their symbols, we are - certainly not repeating his sacrifice, nor yet prolonging it -- but continuing that solemn festival upon it

instituted by Christ, by which we testify our "participation in the altar" and claim our part in the benefits bought by the offering immolated on it. The sacrificial feast is not the sacrifice, in the sense of the act of offering: it is, however, the sacrifice, in the sense of the thing offered, that is eaten in it: and therefore it is presuppositive of the sacrifice in the sense of the act of offering and implies that this offering has already been

performed. The Lord's Supper as a sacrificial feast is accordingly not the sacrifice, that is, the act of offering up Christ's body and blood: it is, however, the sacrifice, that is the body and blood of Christ that were offered, which is eaten in it: and therefore it is presuppositive of the sacrifice as an act of offering and implies that this act has already been performed once for all.

We shall not, however, attempt to develop the conception in its details. Even at a glance it can scarcely escape us that this historical method of conceiving the Lord's Supper approves itself in manifold ways by the light it throws on the problems which have perplexed men in their efforts to understand the Supper. Three of the services it thus renders are worthy of special mention. It throws a bright illumination upon our Lord's words of institution, and makes all the dark places in them light. It offers a ready explanation of the corruptions which have crept into the idea and practice of the Supper in the course of Christian history: as the memory of a sacrificial system died out in the course of generations of men born Christian, the significance of a sacrificial feast was lost and the attempts that were made to find some other meaning for phrases growing out of it necessarily have led to error. And it supplies an adequate interpretation of the Supper itself as it is commended to us by the apostolic writers, and gives it its due place in the body of Christian institutions. A simple historical suggestion which performs such services to thought thereby powerfully commends itself as fundamental to a right conception of the institution.

A Sower Went Out To Sow (2) (Mark 4:10 – 20)

Russ Atmore

Scripture

Mark 4:10 – 20

Key Verse

“and he said to them, “to you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God” Mark 4:11

Theme

Good soil equals fruitful believing hearts and bad soil equals hard, unbelieving hearts.

Exposition

Jesus began his teaching on the seed sown in the various soils from a farming perspective. It was a parable intended to convey spiritual truth. The principles of God's kingdom are laid out in the parables. They force us to ask questions of ourselves and to answer them. Spiritual awareness feels the heat of the parable's application. Jesus' hearers understood his description of the sower going forth to sow. They lived in an society that was agricultural and to many of them these things were commonplace. They might even have smiled as Jesus described the birds of the air coming along and stealing the seed. They could also see in their minds the thorns choking the seed as it grew. Jesus' call to his hearers to respond since they had heard him (1:9) opens the door on his teaching. He was not giving a discourse on agriculture. There was spiritual truth to be heard and obeyed. The question was – who would hear and respond.

This is where the various soils represent the human condition or heart of man. It was not only the 12 disciples who asked Jesus for an explanation of the parable (see vs. 10, “those around him with the twelve...”). These were other followers of Jesus who traveled around with him.

They want to know what the parable means. Jesus immediately distinguishes between two groups of people in verse 11. There will those who will understand spiritual truth and there will be those who will not. The parables were for those who would understand, but for those who would not, the parable would cause them to remain ignorant and without comprehension. In order for them not to understand, Jesus speaks in parables, which implies that the parable would be understood by his disciples. Jesus says that the secrets of the kingdom of God belong to his disciples, but for those who are outside God’s kingdom, everything he says to them will be in parables. This means that someone outside the kingdom of God would understand only the bare essentials of the parable. Such a person would know about the sower, the seed and soil and the various ways the seed is sown and the various kinds of soil, but they would not perceive the truth that Jesus was really conveying.

Jesus refers to the secrets of the kingdom or the mystery of the kingdom. This word “secret” or ‘mystery’ simply implies that without divine revelation, we would remain ignorant of what was being said. It is the Pharisees primarily that Jesus refers to as outside the kingdom. Their hearts were hardened and impenitent. This classification of their hearts is a fulfillment of Isaiah 6:9, 10 which was first spoken by God to Judah in Isaiah’s time. How is it possible for our Savior to speak so harshly of these people? Isaiah’s word is designed to prevent them from understanding spiritual truth. It was the choice of the Pharisees to persist in unbelief, and speaking in parables is a just punishment upon their hard hearts. They must now bear their punishment and accept that they are to blame for their rejection. They are now confirmed in their rejection (see Rom. 1:21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 32).

Jesus desires that his disciples listen carefully to him in order to understand the parable. The seed that is sown is the word of God. The sower could be the Lord Jesus Christ or any disciple. The path

(vs. 15) represents those who have the word snatched away by the birds who is Satan. Those whose hearts are like rocky ground hear the word, receive it joyfully, but there is no root. The pressures of life or persecution come and they abandon the word (vv. 16, 17). The thorns (vv. 18, 19), represent a heart that cares more for the cares of this world. They like their money and possessions more than the word. The word that they hear is choked by their desires for these other things. The end result is unfruitfulness or barrenness spiritually. The good soil (vs. 20), represents the heart that hears the word, accepts the word and produces fruit. It is the heart that is completely the opposite of all the other hearts that Jesus has described.

The fruitful heart produces fruit in different quantities. Some is more than others (30, 60, 100 fold), but it is all fruit.

Application

The human hearts is represented in a variety of ways by Jesus. There are those whose hearts are unresponsive (vs. 15). They hear the word and do nothing. Satan delights in people like these. There are those, whose hearts are impulsive (vs. 16) – the word comes, they receive it immediately and they immediately fall away when trouble comes. There are preoccupied hearts (vs. 18). The cares of this world mean more than the word. They prefer other things. Finally, there are responsive hearts (vs. 20). These people delight to hear the word. They seek to practice the word and so bear fruit.

Fruitbearing is a mark of the true Christian. It is evidenced in various degrees. Some are more fruitful than others, but it is all fruit that will remain (John 15:16). Fruitbearing Christians have the ear of the Father (John 15:7, 16). Let us seek to bear fruit. Let the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) grow and develop in you day by day because the kingdom of God belongs to these.

It was Athanasius (ca. 295 – 373) of Alexandria who exhorted us to follow the faith of the apostles, and hold frequent communion with our Lord. He said, the world is like a sea, and we float on this sea. Under the pilotage of the Word we may safely approach the port. If

we are possessed by wayward inclinations, we will be in peril on the sea and may suffer shipwreck. In the world there are afflictions and trials (Letters 19.7, Easter A.D. 347).

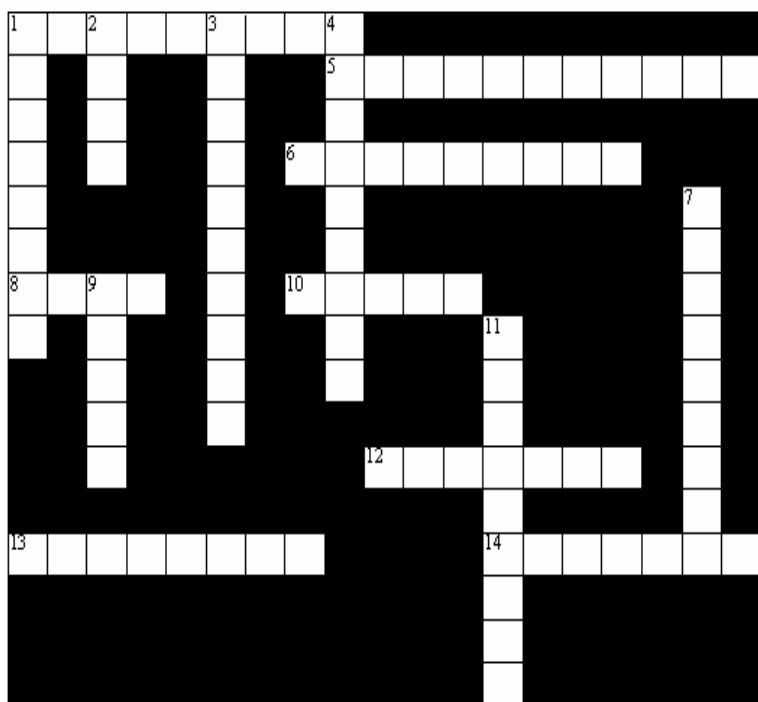
So let us place our hearts under the tutelage of the Word and thus be guided heavenward safely.

“A fruitless person is not a failed Christian, but a false one – in other words, not a Christian at all.”
John Blanchard

Bible Quiz

Kaitlin Atmore

Hope in God



Across

- 1. May those who **hope** in you not be _____ because of me, O Lord, the LORD Almighty; may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me, O God of Israel.

- 5. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be _____ in order that you may know the **hope** to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

- 6. We want each of you to show this same _____ to the very end, in order to make your **hope** sure.

- 8. Though he _____ me, yet will I **hope** in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.

- 10. Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your **hope** fully on the _____ to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

- 12. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this _____, which is Christ in you, the **hope** of glory.

- 13. But Christ is _____ as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the **hope** of which we boast.

- 14. My soul faints with _____ for your salvation, but I have put my **hope** in your word.

Down

- 1. Why are you _____, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your **hope** in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

2. Hope deferred makes the heart _____, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

3. Be joyful in **hope**, patient in _____, faithful in prayer.

4. He has _____ us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our **hope** that he will continue to deliver us,

7. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the **hope** of _____ as a helmet.

9. But by faith we eagerly _____ through the Spirit the righteousness for which we **hope**.

11. Do any of the _____ idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, O LORD our God. Therefore our **hope** is in you, for you are the one who does all this.

“The nature of hope is to expect that which faith believes.”

Richard Sibbes