

Sunday, June 2, 2013

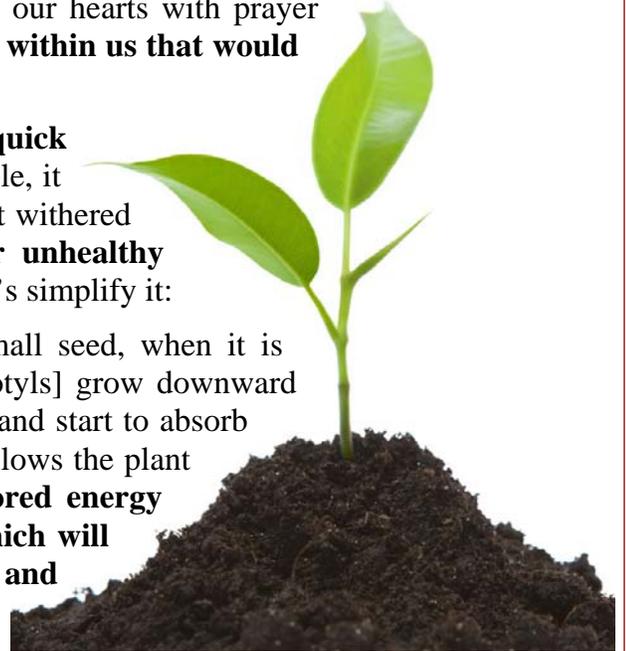
The sown word and the quality of the soil (3)

+ In our spiritual lives, **stones and rocks may resemble some callousness, haughtiness and pride, or hatred that led to hardheartedness. Stones can also resemble our favorite sins such as drinking, watching pornography, or judging the leadership of the church. We must not relent in uprooting these rocks from our hearts, not only because they ruin our lives and make it barren and fruitless, but also because they circumvent us from seeing God, who can only be seen by the pure in heart.**

+ **Therefore, we must pay attention not to allow any hidden rocks from developing in our lives. We also must continuously examine ourselves, repent, confess and fill our hearts with prayer and praise. Thus we don't give a chance to have any dryness within us that would later turn into calcified layers.**

+ **What is amazing about this type of ground is that it is quick to interact with the seed.** As the Lord Jesus said in the parable, it immediately sprang up but after a short while under the sun, it withered and burned. Why did it quickly spring up? **This is rather unhealthy growth**, why? Seed germination is a very complex process, let's simplify it:

1- There is a small amount of energy stored within the small seed, when it is planted and starts to germinate, first, the small root [Hypocotyls] grow downward using the stored energy within the seed. The roots then grow and start to absorb more energy from the deep moist soil to feed the plant, this allows the plant to make a stem and grow upward. **This means that the stored energy within the seed is barely enough to germinate the root which will later be responsible for supplying the plant with the energy and nutrients necessary for its growth.**



If the soil is stony, the rocks will block the path of the small root. Therefore, the stored energy will be rechanneled to quickly form the stem and we end up with a beautiful sprouting plant that has no root and no source of energy. This is why it withers quickly and dies because it has no source of energy and life.

2- **The quick growth is not a sign of vitality, but rather a sign of illness which reveals that the roots are ill-grown and their path is blocked.** Therefore, the plant starts growing upward and looks beautiful above the earth until it consumes all the energy stored in the seed, then it withers and dies.

3- This type of ground is like people who have stones in their hearts, when they hear the word, they immediately accept it joyfully, like a man who gets energized by a sermon heard or an article read. **However, he doesn't invest the energy received from the spoken or written word to have deep roots in his life. Rather than investing this energy to have quiet time to judge himself, to have deep prayers, sincere repentance, then confession,** he channels this spiritual energy to the outside, speaking with people, in social activities, or even serving in the spot lights. He may continue like that for a short while till the energy he took is all spent out, as soon as he is faced with a challenge or tribulation, he relapse and withers once more.

Therefore, the importance of the roots in our spiritual lives is particularly important in this type of ground.

(to be continued).

Fr. Yohanna Naseef

fryohanna@hotmail.com

St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, Palatine, IL