



SAVED TO SERVE

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THE CONDITION OF GOD'S REMNANT CHURCH THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, PART 4

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will continue studying the stony-ground hearers and discover what it means to “count the cost” of serving Jesus Christ.
2. Why are many people stony-ground hearers?

Answer: _____

“It is not because men receive the word immediately, nor because they rejoice in it, that they fall away. As soon as Matthew heard the Saviour's call, immediately he rose up, left all, and followed Him. As soon as the divine word comes to our hearts, God desires us to receive it; and it is right to accept it with joy. “Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” Luke 15:7. And there is joy in the soul that believes on Christ. **But those who in the parable are said to receive the word immediately, do not count the cost. They do not consider what the word of God requires of them. They do not bring it face to face with all their habits of life, and yield themselves fully to its control.”** {COL 46.4}

3. What circumstances reveal whether or not a person is a stony-ground hearer? Matthew 13:21; Luke 8:13

Answer: _____

4. What is one cost we all must count once we decide to follow Jesus? Luke 14:26, 27; Matthew 10:36, 37

Answer: _____

5. What is one excuse stony-ground hearers will give to God for not following Him? Luke 14:17, 18; Matthew 10:21, 22

Answer: _____

6. What is another excuse many will give God for not following Him all the way? Luke 14:19

Answer: _____

7. What is the third excuse given in Luke 14:20? 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15

Answer: _____

“I wish I could make the youth see and feel their danger, especially the danger of making unhappy marriages.” (AH 43.2)

“...Satan is constantly busy to hurry inexperienced youth into a marriage alliance. But the less we glory in the marriages which are now taking place, the better. When the sacred nature and the claims of marriage are understood, it will even now be approved of Heaven, and the result will be happiness to both parties, and God will be glorified. May the Lord enable you to do the work before you to do.” {2T 252.1}

“Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will not advance his plans in this direction without the knowledge that God approves his course. He will not want to choose for himself, but will feel that God must choose for him. We are not to please ourselves, for Christ pleased not Himself. I would not be understood to mean that anyone is to marry one whom he does not love. This would be sin. But fancy and the emotional nature must not be allowed to lead on to ruin. God requires the whole heart, the supreme affections.” (AH 43.3)

8. **Note:** Let's take a look at the life of the apostle Peter, who was once a stony-ground hearer, to further identify what it will take to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.
9. Who did Peter associate with, and what did they cause him to do? Matthew 26:58, 67, 69-72

Answer: _____

10. What two things made it known to others that Peter had been with Jesus? Matthew 26: 73, 74; Luke 22:56; 1 Corinthians 4:9

Answer: _____

“Something must arise to lessen the hold of God's people upon the world. The reform dress is simple and healthful, yet there is a cross in it. I thank God for the cross and cheerfully bow to lift it. We have been so united with the world that we have lost sight of the cross and do not suffer for Christ's sake.” (1T 525.1)

“We should not wish to invent something to make a cross; but if God presents to us a cross, we should cheerfully bear it. In the acceptance of the cross we are distinguished from the world, who love us not and ridicule our peculiarity. Christ was hated by the world because He was not of the world. Can His followers expect to fare better than their Master? If we pass along without receiving censure or frowns from the world we may be alarmed, for it is our conformity to the world which makes us so much like them that there is nothing to arouse their envy or malice; there is no collision of spirits. The world despises the cross. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18. “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14. (1T 525.2)

“God's commandment-keeping people are described by the prophet as “men wondered at.” We are to be a people distinct from the world. The eyes of the world are upon us, and we are observed by many of whom we have no knowledge. There are those who know something of the doctrines we claim to believe, and they are noting the effect of our faith upon our characters. They are waiting to see what kind of influence we exert, and how we carry ourselves before a faithless world. The angels of heaven are looking upon us. “We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men” (1 Corinthians 4:9).”—The Review and Herald, June 18, 1889. 2SM 386.1

11. **Note:** To better illustrate the stony-ground hearers, we have given them the alias, *The Zealots*. As Romans 10:2 says, many have a zeal but not according to knowledge. This describes those on the stony-ground, who when they first receive the truth are very zealous about it, but after trials or temptations come, they fervently go in the opposite direction. We can see this undoubtedly in the life of Peter.

12. What are some other “costs” we must consider when choosing to follow Jesus? Write them down along with your experiences.

13. **Note:** As Steps To Christ, page 43.2 tells us, **“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought.”** When stony-ground hearers are brought face to face with their sins and see what they must give up, they choose the easy road rather than the road of self-denial. Meditate on the following quotation.

“The hot summer sun, that strengthens and ripens the hardy grain, destroys that which has no depth of root. So he who “hath not root in himself,” “dureth for a while”; but “when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” Many receive the gospel as a way of escape from suffering, rather than as a deliverance from sin. They rejoice for a season, for they think that religion will free them from difficulty and trial. While life moves smoothly with them, they may appear to be consistent Christians. **But they faint beneath the fiery test of temptation. They cannot bear reproach for Christ's sake. When the word of God points out some cherished sin, or requires self-denial or sacrifice, they are offended. It would cost them too much effort to make a radical change in their life. They look at the present inconvenience and trial, and forget the eternal realities. Like the disciples who left Jesus, they are ready to say, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?”** John 6:60. (COL 47.2)

14. Read Matthew 13:5, 6, 21. The sun is what causes the seed on the stony-ground to perish. What event in the near future involves *Sunday* observance, persecution, and trials that will test God's people? Revelation 14:9, 10; Revelation 13:15-17

15. As we close, what will motivate stony-ground hearers to give themselves entirely to God? John 3:16; 15:13

Answer: _____

“Love must be the principle of action. Love is the underlying principle of God's government in heaven and earth, and it must be the foundation of the Christian's character. **This alone can make and keep him steadfast. This alone can enable him to withstand trial and temptation.” {COL 49.1}**

“And love will be revealed in sacrifice. The plan of redemption was laid in sacrifice—a sacrifice so broad and deep and high that it is immeasurable. Christ gave all for us, and those who receive Christ will be ready to sacrifice all for the sake of their Redeemer. The thought of His honor and glory will come before anything else.” {COL 49.2}

"If we love Jesus, we shall love to live for Him, to present our thank offerings to Him, to labor for Him. The very labor will be light. **For His sake we shall covet pain and toil and sacrifice.** We shall sympathize with His longing for the salvation of men. We shall feel the same tender craving for souls that He has felt." {COL 49.3}

16. How can we experience the love of God in our lives? Meditate on 1 Corinthians 13 & the quotations below.

"And what was to be gained by this sacrifice? How hopeless appeared the guilt and ingratitude of men! In its hardest features Satan pressed the situation upon the Redeemer: The people who claim to be above all others in temporal and spiritual advantages have rejected You. They are seeking to destroy You, the foundation, the center and seal of the promises made to them as a peculiar people. One of Your own disciples, who has listened to Your instruction, and has been among the foremost in church activities, will betray You. One of Your most zealous followers will deny You. All will forsake You. Christ's whole being abhorred the thought. That those whom He had undertaken to save, those whom He loved so much, should unite in the plots of Satan, this pierced His soul. The conflict was terrible. Its measure was the guilt of His nation, of His accusers and betrayer, the guilt of a world lying in wickedness. The sins of men weighed heavily upon Christ, and the sense of God's wrath against sin was crushing out His life." {DA 687.1}

"... When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With earnest desire they yield all and manifest an interest proportionate to the value of the object which they seek. A profession of Christ without this deep love is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery." (SC 44.2)

"Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to yield all to Christ? Ask yourself the question, "What has Christ given for me?" The Son of God gave all—life and love and suffering—for our redemption. And can it be that we, the unworthy objects of so great love, will withhold our hearts from Him? Every moment of our lives we have been partakers of the blessings of His grace, and for this very reason we cannot fully realize the depths of ignorance and misery from which we have been saved. Can we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced, and yet be willing to do despite to all His love and sacrifice? In view of the infinite humiliation of the Lord of glory, shall we murmur because we can enter into life only through conflict and self-abasement?" {SC 45.1}

"But what do we give up, when we give all? A sin-polluted heart, for Jesus to purify, to cleanse by His own blood, and to save by His matchless love. And yet men think it hard to give up all! I am ashamed to hear it spoken of, ashamed to write it." (SC 46.1)

"God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view. Would that all who have not chosen Christ might realize that He has something vastly better to offer them than they are seeking for themselves. Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by Him who knows what is best and who plans for the good of His creatures. The path of transgression is the path of misery and destruction." {SC 46.2}

"The Lord desires me to call the attention of his people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless." {RH July 21, 1904, par. 1}