

Weekly Devotions: TO LOVE GOD IS TO OBEY HIM 5

Can Your Faith Go the Long Haul?

One of the greatest distractions in 21st century faith is our preoccupation with sensationalism. Many Christians go from one revival meeting to another hoping to have that spectacular and stimulating spiritual experience. Phillip Keller, who wrote on the place of experience and obedience in one's faith journey, emphasized that the sum total of a person's faith must be more than a succession of ecstatic emotional encounters. An obedient heart is the measure of one's spiritual maturity.

The robustness of our faith depends on whether we allow God's truths to take root in our heart and shape the way we think, speak, act and live. For us to grow spiritually and be transformed from glory to glory, we must not neglect God's word. We must also guard against anything that may distract our attention from God and anything that will lure us from His word. Unless God's word takes root in our mind and heart, and unless we are ready to live by His word, our faith will be superficial and cannot persevere to the end.

Read Matt 13: 3-9; 18-23

Jesus warned that not everyone who receives the seed of the gospel will be fruitful and faithful. He emphasized that the seed of the gospel or God's word can only bring spiritual life and bears fruit when the soil is good.

Jesus highlighted four types of soil which represent 4 types of responses to His word. The first are those who are indifferent, who fail to take His word seriously. The second are those whose faith is shallow, who do not allow His word to be deeply rooted in their lives. Third are those who are distracted by the world. Only 1 group gladly welcome the word of God, dig deep into His word and please God by obeying His word. The Sower, God Himself, and the seed, His Word, are unchanging but the result, whether there is spiritual life and the fruit of transformation, depends on our response to God's word.

Questions to ponder

1. Describe the 4 places on which the seed fell and what type of response is represented by each type of soil (4-8, 19-23)? Why was the seed unable to grow and bear fruit in three out of the four places? What type of soil would you say you are at this point of time?
2. What are some distractions and "cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches" (22) that you have encountered in your faith journey? How can you be the 'good soil' where the seed of God's word can take root and bear fruit (23)?