

## Elder Ronnie Loudermilk



### Hearing The Preached Word (part 2)

Matthew 13:5-6, **"Some fell upon the stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away."**

Matthew 13:20-21, **"But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."**

The life of a disciple of Jesus Christ is one that will encounter obstacles and opposition. Jesus said in John 16:33, **"In the world ye shall have tribulation:..."** Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12, **"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."** The things that be of this world are always, and till the last day, at enmity with the things that be of God.

In the verses previously cited, we read of a child of grace who **"heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;..."** But when persecution came, they were offended and ceased to receive and failed to walk in the way of righteousness that they had heard. This individual could be defined as a temporary hearer of the word. He/She is one who heard the gospel and rejoiced in the truth, but when opposition came, they went away (**"withered away"**) and failed to obey the gospel

commands of obedience. Since every child of grace can expect mountains of opposition and sometimes a wilderness of obstacles, we should always:

(1) Prayerfully labor to maintain a faithful focus on Jesus Christ! Every child of grace should be concerned with their own efforts of faithful obedience. The life of a disciple is called a "**race**" in Hebrews 12:1. In any race the eyes of the contestant must stay focused on the goal ahead, otherwise it would surely cause a trip or stumble. Revelation 22:11 teaches this very principal, "**He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.**" You may ask, "*Why is this so important?*" Because the devil will use the actions of others to hinder your race in following Jesus Christ. A life of a disciple is one that follows Jesus Christ and is less and less concerned with what the world really thinks.

(2) Prayerfully labor to endure the hardness of the world! In 2 Timothy 2:3, the Apostle instructs and exhorts Timothy to "**endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**" Paul understood what Timothy was facing in Ephesus. Paul knew about the wickedness of the city (Acts 19:19); the battle for the mind and ears of the children of God with the entertainments of the theatre (Acts 19:29); and the idolatry of the people and the temptations thereof (Acts 19:24-25). Every hearer of the word should receive this exhortation to overcome the opposition to be a faithful disciple. In my own experience, I have witnessed many children of God who were so excited about the Church and a life of obedience, only to fall away once they encountered the hardness of this present evil world. My prayers are with them and for them, that they would soon realize the need to endure such things to be identified with Jesus Christ in this world.

(3) Prayerfully labor in a life of perseverance! The Apostle Paul called on the Church at Ephesus to "**persevere**" in the Christian life. Paul instructed them to "**Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**" Paul called on the Ephesians to continue in the word of truth, and to be aware that the devil and the spiritual wickedness of this world would love nothing more than to see the child of grace fall away from a life of obedience.

Brothers and Sisters, the scorching "**sun**" of persecutions and oppositions will arise. Will we be defined as temporary hearers of the word, or be like those at

Antioch who were "**called Christians**"? My prayer is that every child of promise will experience the blessedness of a life following Jesus. Amen!