



“Dull Hearts” (13: 1–23)(11.1.20)

Matthew 13:1–23 (NIV84) *The Parable of the Sower*

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.



³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.



⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

Seed that fell on rocky places



⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.



⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear.”

Seed that fell on good soil

¹⁰ The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

¹¹ He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹² Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

¹⁴ In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“ ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.



¹⁵ For this people’s heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.’

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears
because they hear. ¹⁷ For I tell you the truth, many prophets
and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see

it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.



¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When
anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not
understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was
sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.



²⁰ The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is
the man who hears the word and at once receives it with
joy. ²¹ But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time.
When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he
quickly falls away.



²² The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns
is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life
and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.



Seed that fell on good soil

²³ But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: **“Dull Hearts”**

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

DR. [Leonard Sweet](#) Facebook post 10/30/2020

“A sign of the times? A portent of the future?

Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese (1997-2011), has gone on record as recommending that infant baptism be viewed as a human rights abuse. By imposing lifelong obligations on humans as young as two weeks old, she argues in an interview in the Irish Times, parents are violating a child's fundamental human rights. McAleese identifies herself as a Catholic academic and even holds a licentiate and doctorate in Canon law. So this call for an end to infant baptism not on theological but political grounds is coming not from without but from within the church.”

I ask you, “Has there ever been a time when humanity needed to hear the “message of the kingdom” more than now?” Jesus’ very next parable is about the weeds sown amongst the wheat. While the “world,” by which I mean those things that oppose the kingdom of God, has throughout human history been Satan’s realm, it seems today that the Church is threatened from within.

How appropriate that yesterday, October 31st was Reformation Day, the celebration of Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses to the door of [All Saints' Church in Wittenburg](#), Germany. He condemned the corruption within the Roman Catholic Church; renewed the emphasis on salvation by faith alone; and, championed the sole authority of the Holy Scriptures. And, we celebrate All Saints Day today.

BODY:

For a couple of generations in the 1900’s, the Protestant Church relied on the cultural acceptance of Christianity. Church membership and Sunday Schools were populated as families raised their children in the Church. A nation needs a birthrate of 2.1 children per woman to maintain its population. As a nation we have fallen well below that level; and so it is in the Church too.

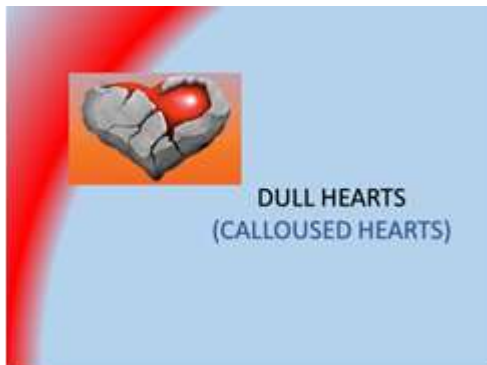
It is actually significantly worse for the Church for several reasons. There is no longer any cultural pressure to be a Christian, in fact the pendulum is swinging the other way. We have lost not just the children, but the whole family. And, Satan has attacked the family on several fronts. Today, a popular activist group is advocating for the dissolution of the nuclear family. Even those families in the church have not been properly trained to be Sowers of the Message of the Kingdom. By and large, those that profess Jesus Christ, evidence little difference in their lives from the way worldly families live.

Several months ago, while I was still preaching out in the parking lot, our District Superintendent watched it on Facebook. He is also a member of our Emmaus Faithlife Group. He called because he was concerned. He wondered why I was preaching about the “fear of the Lord.” He very gently suggested that the daily devotional prayer guide and reading through the Bible in a year might be too intense for a lot of people. Maybe I was expecting too much of you.

I plead guilty! We are dying men and women in a dying world. Eternity with our God or in the abyss of hell await every person. The Church has been commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ. His parting words were to penetrate every corner of the globe and make disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is an imperative! Church, we are Plan A and there is no Plan B.



We are called to be good soil and we are called to be sowers, casting the seed of the message of the kingdom far and wide. Only some will truly hear, truly receive the good news of Jesus, and they themselves become disciples and sowers. Whether they respond to the gospel, is between them and the Lord. If we are the fertile soil a harvest will be reaped through us. We will be that kernel of wheat that dies to self and produces a crop.

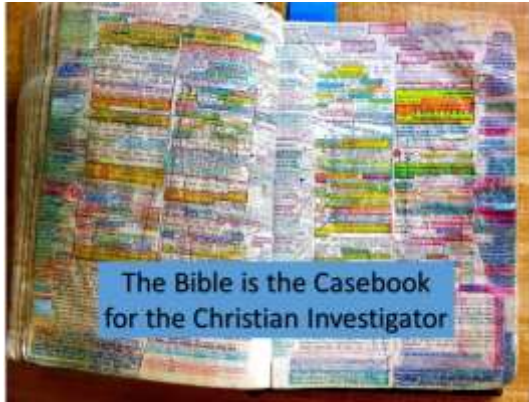


Jesus teaches us in the Parable of the Sower that many people's hearts are dull or calloused. They have twisted perceptions. They have stinkin' thinkin'. The dull heart is the hardened path. The dull heart is a rocky place. The dull heart is shallow and has no root. The dull heart is overcome by the worries of this world. The dull heart lusts after earthly wealth instead of heavenly treasure. It gets to the point where they simply will not be able to hear.

Jesus explains to his disciples that is why he is preaching in parables. For those that are receptive to the light of Christ, they see and hear what the faithful throughout history had longed to see. Jesus quotes Isaiah in this parable. And he fulfills Psalm 78:2 (NIV84) I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old—

Warren Wiersbe writes: "Jesus did not teach in parables to confuse or condemn the people. Rather, He sought to excite their interest and arouse their curiosity. These parables would give light to those with trusting, searching hearts. But they would bring darkness to the unconcerned and unrepentant."

Have you heard Jesus' message about the kingdom? Do you understand what Jesus wants? WE are to be the good soil. We are to be fruitful. We are to produce a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. As your pastor, a major goal for me is to help you be that good and fruitful soil. That is why I stress the importance of learning God's word, about studying God's word, about sharing God's word.



*J. Warner Wallace tells us our Bibles should be like his cold-case notebook.
Explain



*Emmaus Faithlife Bible Study

Emmaus Faithlife Group Bible Study



*Cold-Case Bible Study to be formed. Probably when we finish reading through the Bible in January.

Cold-Case Christianity Bible Study



*ColdcaseChristianity.com

<https://coldcasechristianity.com/>

*J.



Warner Wallace on Facebook

On Facebook

A great many people, because of their misguided thoughts don't trust the Bible. I interacted online with a one such woman. She said that Jesus didn't die on the cross; and, He got married and had three children. When she said that God never came in the flesh, I asked her what she thought about the Bible. She had done some research and she knew some historical stuff. She spoke about the differences between different Christian Bibles; how they include different books. Her conclusion was that it was therefore a human creation. Why are there differences? There is a very serious concern about the authenticity and authority of any particular book. Different Christian faith traditions have interpreted the standards differently. So, this woman has thrown out the baby with the bathwater.



Jesus teaching: refers to the Old Testament 514 times.

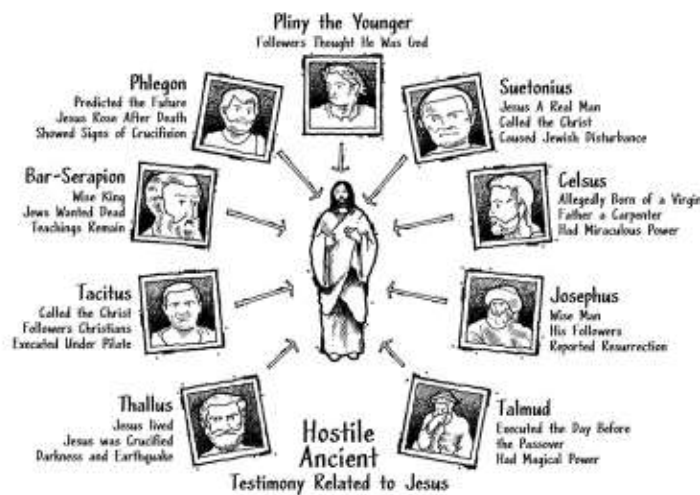
What Was Jesus' View of the Old Testament? Here it the answer from From blueletterbible.org:

The proper view of Scripture will be the perspective that Jesus held. He is our standard. Therefore, it is absolutely crucial that we hold the same view of Scripture as He did.

As we examine the attitude of the Lord Jesus toward the Old Testament, we find Him viewing it as totally trustworthy. Jesus accepted the entire Old Testament as the Word of God. He referred to the two divisions of the Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets and He cited from fourteen separate books.

Jesus believed that the people actually existed and the stories literally occurred. He confirmed the historicity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Elijah, Elisha and Zechariah.

Jesus also confirmed a number of Old Testament accounts. These include God giving Moses the rite of circumcision, God providing the manna in the wilderness, David eating the bread of presentation, David as the writer of certain Psalms, Moses writing the law, the suffering of the prophets, the episode with Lot's wife, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the destruction of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus also confirmed a number of the most controversial accounts recorded in the Old Testament. They include: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Flood in Noah's day and Jonah and the sea creature. There was also the confirmation by Jesus of the authorship of certain disputed portions of the Old Testament—Daniel and Isaiah. Jesus quoted from Daniel as a prophet. He also cited both sections of Isaiah and attributed them to Isaiah alone. Jesus also spoke of Old Testament prophecy being fulfilled. He assumed the passages cited made divine predictions which needed to be fulfilled. He also saw the Old Testament as speaking of Him. It anticipated His coming into the world. In addition, Jesus never cast doubt on any parts of the Old Testament. On the contrary, He believed all of it was equally authoritative. Consequently, Christians, to be consistent, should have the same view as Jesus; the Old Testament is the divinely inspired Word of the living God.



In Forensic Faith, J. Warner Wallace answers why we can trust the Jesus from our casebook, our Bibles. This slide shows the different outside sources to which he refers.

He says, "Take another look at all the evidence for Jesus we've discovered **outside** the "casebook." The passage of time helped us to collect this additional data, just as it often does in my cold-case investigations. If someone were to ask you, "Why do you

believe Jesus actually lived and that you can trust what the Bible says about him?" you could now respond by way of a *summary*:

If every Bible ever printed was destroyed and the only ancient documents we had mentioning Jesus were those written by hostile non-Christians, we'd still know the following: Jesus was a real man who lived in history. He was reportedly born of a virgin and had an earthly father who was a carpenter. He lived in Judea, in the region known as Palestine. He was wise and righteous. His teaching was so influential that He developed a large following of Jewish and Gentile disciples. He taught His disciples to live with the same virtue He exhibited, and His moral code was exceedingly high. But Jesus was more than a moral teacher: He possessed "magical powers" and had the ability to predict the future accurately. His supernatural acts and teachings persuaded many Jews to walk away from their beliefs. Jesus claimed to be God, and His disciples readily accepted this claim. The Jewish leadership ultimately brought charges against Jesus based on His actions and teachings. He was prosecuted and crucified

under Pontius Pilate, during the reign of Tiberius Caesar. There was an earthquake and darkness at the point of the execution. Jesus's followers reported seeing Him resurrected three days after the crucifixion, however, and Jesus even showed them His wounds. His followers believed the resurrection proved Jesus was the Messiah. They adopted Jesus's moral teaching and lived their lives accordingly, holding to their belief in His deity, even though it meant they would suffer greatly at the hands of the Roman Empire. They were ultimately persecuted for their faith in Christ. That's a *lot* of information from ancient non-Christian sources, and it happens to agree with what the Bible says about Jesus. The case for the historicity of Jesus is strong. The record found *inside* the Christian "casebook" is a reliable account of Jesus's life and ministry, and it is strengthened by the passage of time as additional evidence emerged *outside* the book. There are many other time-assisted forms of evidence we could examine outside the Christian "casebook." In *Cold-Case Christianity*, I offer several examples, including evidence from archaeology. The evidence from additional sources *outside* the Bible strengthens the case made *inside* the Bible."^[1]

CONCLUSION:



As we prepare to celebrate Holy Communion, I encourage you with these reminders. Earlier we confessed our sin. This peels away a layer from dull calloused hearts. God is faithful and forgives us. Our faithful Father cleanses us. We have the promises given in Christ Jesus. While we were yet sinners He died for us. This is love. Is your heart softened? Are you fertile soil ready for the seed? Will the message of the kingdom be multiplied through you? By the grace of God, I pray you answer yes. Amen and amen. Let us pray.

^[1] Wallace, J. W. (2017). [*Forensic faith: a homicide detective makes the case for a more reasonable, evidential christian faith*](#). Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook.