

## POTATOES AND EGGS

So much of our culture today is shallow. We are only interested in what affects us directly. We don't care what goes on in government, education, and the media, as long as it doesn't bother me personally. Many people just naively listen to and believe whatever is put out in the news or entertainment. Others don't even bother to be informed, let alone apply discernment or take action.

In explaining the parable of the sower, Jesus said the seed sown in the lives of such people might sprout, but would wither when trouble or persecution came (see Matt. 13:21). What struck me is that in the parable itself, Jesus said, "But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and they withered because they had no root" (v.6).

The sun comes up every day, without fail. The sun is absolutely necessary to warm the soil so seeds will germinate. Sunshine stimulates bees to come out and do their work of pollination. The warmth of the sun is good, not trouble and persecution.

What I think Jesus is saying is that deep roots are essential. They are needed to enable the plant to withstand storms and carry the weight of fruit bearing. Shallow roots leave the plant vulnerable not only to tornadoes but also to moderate winds. A plant without an adequate root system can be decimated by tiny insects as easily as by voracious animals.

We need not think of armed robbery or state-sanctioned persecution or even a personal vendetta when we think of trouble or persecution. The vicissitudes of everyday life are enough to scorch a shallow-rooted Christian. A serious illness, personal conflict, financial reversal, accident, or any of a host of lesser trials come to mind as examples of "when the sun came up." These things happen to all of us at one time or another. The old saying that the same boiling water will soften a potato and harden an egg comes to mind.

These trials and problems that would scorch and wither a shallow Christian will draw a deep-rooted Christian closer to Jesus. They strengthen his faith and deepen his love for the Savior. The roots make all the difference. And what is this soil that we are to sink our roots so deeply into? None other than love, God's love. In his prayer for the Ephesians Paul says, "And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:17-19).

To be rooted and established in love enables us to see how vast God's love is, "reaching to even me," as the old hymn says. And seeing the boundlessness of that love draws us to dive into its immensity, to be joyfully enveloped in what we cannot comprehend. Sink your roots deeply into the fertile soil of God's abundant, gracious, everlasting love. Be a potato, not an egg.