

Faith Matters

What Jesus really said - To the crowds following him?

Matthew 7:7-29 and Luke 8:4-8

Exploring the relevance of faith for us today

Revelation 3:20

Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me."



How can we ask, seek and knock? (Matthew 7:7-11)

The 'Golden Rule', a well-known moral standard in both ancient Greece and Israel, was: 'that which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow.' How does Jesus take this a step further in Matthew 7:12 (See also Luke 6:27-38)

In Matthew 7:13-29 we discover 'The Two Ways': How does each of these help us to know the way?

The two paths.....

The two trees.....

Two responses to Christ.....

The two builders.....

The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-8)

What does the seed represent?

What do the four types of soil represent?

Beside the road.....

Rocky soil.....

Amongst thorns.....

Good soil.....

Consider ways in which can we help God's word to take root in our lives.

Summary of Jesus' Message

- Jesus encourages us to persist in seeking God: ask, seek and knock.
- We should build our lives on the solid rock, by acting on the words of Christ (Isaiah 28:16).
- Our hearts should be like a 'moist, fertile soil, well-drained', to allow God to transform our lives and grow us to maturity.



A Nineteenth Century Fairytale Parable From 'The Happy Man - The Abiding Witness of Lachlan MacKenzie' (Transcribed by James Campbell. Reprinted Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1979)

The Duke's Daughter

During the height of his fame as a Highland evangelist, the Rev Mr Lachlan MacKenzie (minister of Lochcarron from 1782 to 1819) was invited to Aberdeen, to the Old Parish Church of St Nicholas.he chose as his text Revelation 3:20 - "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me."

Once upon a time there lived in our Highlands a great Duke. He had a large estate, was very rich, and had everything in this world to make a man happy, so far as worldly gear was concerned. He was a widower, had an only child, a beautiful girl, who was beloved by all around. When she was 20 years of age her father said to her, "My daughter, next year you will become of age, and I intend to ask to the castle here, for a week's festivities, all the young nobles of the land. I expect that many of them will be asking your hand in marriage, and I beg of you to see that you make a good choice, for your happiness in your after-life will depend on the choice you make. "

The time soon came for the celebration of her 21st birthday, and while her Ladyship was in her room with her maid dressing, in preparation for the reception of the guests, a loud knocking was heard at the back door of the court. One of the men-servants, on going out to see who was making such a noise, found a beggar man on crutches. The man-servant ordered him to go away. "Don't trouble her Ladyship," he said, "she is very busy, and many guests are coming shortly to the castle."

But the beggar answered that he would not go away until he saw her Ladyship. Thereupon the door was slammed in the beggar's face; but he took up one of his crutches and laid on to the door, making such a noise that it brought back the servant, who threatened to put the dogs on to him if he did not go away. To this the beggar only replied that the dogs would not frighten him, and he would not go away until he had seen her Ladyship. To try and frighten him the servant went to the kennels, and at once the dogs set up such a terrible howling that the noise reached her Ladyship's ears; and she sent her maid to find out the meaning of it all. The maid returned with the information that it was a poor, lame beggar man who wanted to see her Ladyship, and he would not go away until he saw her. "Very well," replied her Ladyship, "I will be down presently. Tell him to wait till I come."

Shortly afterwards her Ladyship went down. Seeing the beggar, she asked him kindly, "Well, my good man, what do you want?" He bowed, and then said, "I have come to ask your hand in marriage today." Her Ladyship looked at him steadfastly for a moment, then stepping forward, said "Very well. Here it is." The beggar approached, bowed low, and taking her hand in his, kissed it, adding "And on what day will you marry me?" To which her Ladyship replied, "This day twelve months hence." On hearing her reply, the beggar gathered up his crutches and hobbled away, greatly to the relief and delight of the servants standing around, who thought that she had got rid of the beggar very quickly and easily.

During the week of the festivities many of the young nobles asked her hand in marriage, but all of them got the same reply, "I am betrothed already." Many began asking who the 'lucky fellow' was, but no one could tell. At last it came to her father's ears that she had been asked by many, and all had been given the same refusal, and that she had already given her hand in marriage to a beggar, with a promise that it should take place in a year's time. Her father was heart-broken.

"Is it true, my daughter, that you have given your hand in marriage to a poor beggar man?"

"Yes, father, it is quite true, and it will be alright."

The week of festivities ended rather abruptly, everyone being greatly disappointed at the news of her betrothal to the beggar.

During the year her father time after time called her to his side, saying "Oh, my daughter! oh my daughter! comfort me. Tell me it is all a mistake." But her answer was always the same, "It is quite true, and it will be alright."

At length the year passed by. No preparation was made for the marriage, and on the day appointed her father sent for her, and said "You see, my daughter, there is no one coming." "Oh, but he will come!" she replied.

One o'clock chimed, yet no appearance of anyone coming. About two o'clock in the afternoon, however, a great noise was heard coming over the hill towards the castle. Everyone in the house rushed to the windows, and what they beheld was a wonderful procession of pipers, drummers and horsemen, in large numbers. Up to the front door of the castle came a guard of prancing horsemen, who lined both sides of the avenue. Wheeling around, they drew up, forming a guard of honour. Then, last of all, came a beautiful prancing steed, with a noble rider on its back. On reaching the steps leading to the doorway of the castle, this rider threw himself from the saddle, ran up the steps, and embraced his beloved.

Who was he? The King's son! That morning twelve months before he had disguised himself as a poor beggar... Recognising his eyes, she knew who he was, and kept his secret. So all were glad at the end.

Mr MacKenzie then repeated his text and asked , "Who is standing at your heart's door and knocking tonight, my people? A beggar! One of Whom it was said, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." If you will give Him your hand in marriage, He will make you a Queen, for He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

'O momentary grace of mortal men, Which we more hunt for than the grace of God.'

Shakespeare, Richard III