

ReFocus 2019
Deep Roots pt 1
Psalm 1

Tsunami Effect:

Monster waves have nothing to do with the wind or the water at the surface. It has to do with something down deep like an earthquake or shift in tectonic plates. The waves up top are the result of the shift below the surface. No lasting change occurs in a life from external pressure at the top. It comes from radical paradigm shifts in the heart and mind. i.e. "Be transformed by the renewing of the mind."

Behavior is always rooted in belief. There is a belief system behind behavior change. This Tsunami effect relates to our culture as a church and life change and ministry flow out of our culture. Real life change happens when there is an internal shift. The issue for us is, "Are we simply passive in this or is there a way to cultivate an inner shift?"

CAN YOU IDENTIFY WITH THIS perspective??? CARDAPHONIA letter #2
The struggle in spiritual growth is real,

What believers would want to do:

They would willingly enjoy God in prayer: —They know that prayer is a great delight and a duty; it is an honor and privilege. They can sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer." They are at times struck by the humility of God that He would open His ear to our cries.

YET, how often do they enjoy private prayer as they would? How often does it just seem like a task to be checked off? Their chief pleasure in prayer is in knowing that it is finished. They have been drawing near to God with their lips, but not their hearts.

They would enjoy the reading of the Bible. They believe it is the word of God and they admire the wisdom and grace of the teaching, the richness of the promises, and affirm that it is preferable to gold and silver, and sweeter than honey. **YET** while they wish the word dwelt in them richly, they don't do as they would. It requires great persistence in simply reading a portion of it each day and even then their hearts are not full engaged. The privilege becomes a task and they end up with little desire for the food for their souls.

They would admire the person, work, and love of Jesus. They find gladness when they recall the love of Christ, which enables them to carry on in other spiritual practices. **YET** they don't do as they would. They must admit that trivial things are capable of shutting Him out of their thoughts even when we would say that He is the beloved of our souls and whom we have deliberately chosen as our chief good and portion.

Though they aim at good they recognize that evil is still present with them. They have need to ask for God's ongoing renewing work in their hearts.

They would willingly profess belief that God is in control of all things and works all things together for the good to those that love Him and are called according to His purpose. **YET** when distress comes they feel the war within them and despite their dearest theological conviction, they are ready to complain, murmur and despond.

It is all too easy to live by the surface and the external circumstances rather than being deeply rooted in God. The Tsunami of change starts at the deep level of the heart and that is what we're seeking to develop here are Highlands.

Our 500 year vision – Make disciples. This is life and death stuff; it is high stakes and it is forever. If it doesn't make sense to you yet, that's ok. We want to meet you where you are, but know that the issues are serious and an inner Tsunami may happen in your life when you get close to Christ. In fact, if you really come to know him, then you should expect a Tsunami to happen.

Jesus is the foundation of our church, but there are traits of a church culture that promote real life change.

These traits are not flashy with bells and whistles. They are not new marketing tools or innovative strategies. They are traits that God described thousands of years ago.

Those traits can be seen in Psalm 1: 1-3

1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.
3 He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Roots, Branches, Fruit- Psalm 1. We'll explore these traits in the next few weeks.

DEEP ROOTS – the roots determine everything. Nothing is more important to the life of a tree than its root system. The M & E follower is one who sinks his/her roots deep into God through embracing Christ and a life of personal and corporate worship. This relates to the reality of INTIMACY WITH God (John 15 ABIDING). Jesus is the perfect example of this – he “often went off to pray”; his heart was saturated with the Word of God; He came to do the will of His Father. Jesus was characterized by a pursuit of God, and the same Holy Spirit who was in Christ is in those who know him by faith.

We all sink our roots into something!! Where are your roots?

HEALTHY BRANCHES- the image of the tree indicates branches that push out – toward believers and non-believers.

The rivers of living water within enable our branches to push out to unite with the branches of other believers. It was the unexplainable love among believers in the early church that had such a striking impact on those around them. One early pagan emperor noted, “These Christians love one another before they're even acquainted.”

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, those branches also grow to reach out to the end of the earth – Acts 1:8

ABUNDANT FRUIT – The tree rooted in the living water of Christ, with growing branches, will also bear FRUIT. Those who ABIDE will bear fruit – Jn 15:5.

In scripture “fruit” refers to several aspects of spirituality:

- Godly character- LJPPKGFGS (Gal 5:22ff)
- Good works – Mat 7:16-17, Col 1:10
- Converts – Jn 4:36; Col 1:6
- Worship Heb 13:15
- Giving – 2 Cor 9:10

Fruit is anything that represents the tangible outflowing of the indwelling Christ. It is His life spilling out through us before God, others, and the world.

THE MOST IMPORTANT of these is Deep roots. NOTHING MATTERS MORE than the roots- the health of the tree is all about the roots. Psalm 1

The most important thing about your spiritual life is something that will never be seen by others. It is hidden and unheralded. It is the most obscure and least noticed, but it is the most important thing that we were created for – Having our heart and soul renewed by God daily.

Different words or images such as “abiding in Christ or keeping or watching over the heart” are used to convey this core understanding. Jeremiah and Ezek speak of the new covenant as one where we have the law of God written on our hearts and where God removes the heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh.

John FLAVEL wrote a treatise based on Prov 4:23 (a small group of men recently made our way through that treatise on Wed Nights) On Keeping the Heart

*23 Guard your heart with all diligence,
For from it flow the springs of life.*

Proposition.—The keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the one great business of a Christian's life. (this only happens as we sink Deep roots into God)

Your care and diligence in keeping your heart will prove one of the best evidences of the sincerity of your faith. I don't know of any external act of religion which truly distinguishes the sound from the unsound professor of faith. Matt 6

The heart of man is his worst part before it is regenerated, and the best afterward; it is the seat of principles, and the fountain of actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be principally fixed upon it.

Keeping the heart is the make or break point for our spiritual lives and thus for all the other areas of our lives.

EX: Why do missionaries leave the field? “Conflict with fellow missionaries” – NO – rather it is a failure to take care of themselves spiritually, i.e to watch over their hearts.

EX: Why do Christians in families and churches fuss and fight and divide? Usually because of a failure to KEEP THE HEART.

EX: How do we discover and put to death the besetting sins in our lives? By keeping watch over our hearts and sometimes that involves giving other people access to our hearts.
“Sin demands to have a man alone.”

Let's consider some biblically based convictions about Deep Roots and Keeping the Heart.

*1. God desires intimacy with us more than service from us. –Rev 2 Church of Ephesus
2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

Ministry had become their idol while God was seeking intimacy with us.

“Busyness” is the new badge of righteousness and importance.

EX: Andy Griffith – “Band Concert” – a decent point but no scriptural basis given.

Time alone, our delight and joy in Him is what God wants from us. For this we need a “slowed down” spirituality – more on this next week.

*2. Knowing God is the greatest prize we can experience - Jer 9:23,24
23 Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.*

v. 23 covers just about all the things we boast in and God says, “they are nothing compared to knowing me.” Human achievement in academics, , politics, sports, influence, finances – they all pale compared to knowing God.

Knowing God is such a great prize because enjoyment of God reaches deeper into the soul than anything or anyone else can. Have you tasted that?

Blaise Pascal- French physicist, mathematician, philosopher, author:

*The year of grace 1654, Monday, 23 November, From about half past ten at night until about half past midnight,
FIRE.*

GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob not of the philosophers and of the learned. Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace. GOD of Jesus Christ. My God and your God. Your GOD will be my God. Forgetfulness of the world and of everything, except GOD. He is only found by the ways taught in the Gospel. Grandeur of the human soul. Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you. Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.....Renunciation, total and sweet. Complete submission to Jesus Christ and to my director. Eternally in joy for a day’s exercise on the earth. May I not forget your words. Amen.

He had it sewn into the lining of his jacket. Found upon his death

Communion with God heals our souls like nothing else

Ps 27 “I would have despaired unless I believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living...” Psalm 94:19

Ps73 The ungodly were prospering and he was questioning the value of walking with God...

16 When I pondered to understand this,

It was troublesome in my sight

17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God;

Then I perceived their end....

25 Whom have I in heaven but You?

And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.

26 My flesh and my heart may fail,

But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Each week going to church I listen to a praise song based on v. 25-26. It resets my perspective.

What keeps us from enjoying Him or causes me to doubt his love?

#25. Resolved, to examine carefully, and constantly, what that one thing in me is, which causes me in the least to doubt of the love of God; and to direct all my forces against it

Knowing God is the greatest treasure because it expands our souls

Spurgeon - <https://www.epm.org/resources/2010/Mar/12/charles-spurgeon-subject-god/>

But while the subject humbles the mind, it also expands it.... The most excellent study for expanding the soul, is the science of Christ, and Him crucified, and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity.

And, while humbling and expanding, this subject is eminently consolatory. Oh, there is, in contemplating Christ, a balm for every wound; in musing on the Father, there is a quietus for every grief; and in the influence of the Holy Ghost, there is a balsam for every sore.

3.) Spend time alone with God because we want to – Jer 31. In the depth of the new heart is a desire and longing for God. It is His spirit bearing witness with our spirit by which we cry, “Abba Father.” Rom 8

HOOK – “He’s just a mean man who needs a mommy”. True, but even more true today is the cry of those who need a father, a daddy. We all have a father wound. How is it healed? As Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name.”

The Holy Spirit within us delights in spending time alone with the Father. **The spiritual welling being we seek is enriched by extended time alone with God as we get a sense of the length, depth, height, and breadth of His love for us in Christ.**

There is no magic formula to making that happen, but next week we'll look at some practical applications.

The TABLE BEFORE US is a good way to draw near to God. It is a way to sink our roots into Him and be nourished by Christ when we come to the Table by faith discerning what He has done for us.

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