



September 16, 2022

### **The Lesson of the Dandelion**

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here in North Carolina. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

My wife and I are here in North Carolina visiting scattered brethren, and to officiate a wedding for a young couple that I was blessed to do premarital counseling with. Times like this are always joyous and energizing!

We've had an interesting summer with pretty normal temperatures, but even for the Gulf Coast, an abnormal amount of rain fell for most all of the month of August. After all the rain, the grass was really growing and the trees were leafing out.

This brought back memories of when I lived in Nebraska, and when similar weather occurred, these pesky dandelions would begin poking up their yellow heads and taunting the homeowner or lawn keeper to lop them off! Dandelions have a large deep tap root and even when the lawns turn brownish during the hotter and dryer part of summer, they manage to stay green and keep growing and blooming! When they near the end of growing, they turn grayish white and into fuzzy seed balls that are also beautiful to observe. Dandelions have always amazed me, as they are able to bring up moisture and nutrients from deeper in the soil. Other shallow rooted plants or weeds start to wither and fade. I personally like the scene of an entire field full of colorful bright yellow dandelions, but it appears not too many others share my perspective.

Whether you love them or hate them, dandelions are among the most familiar plants in the world. They're one species that just about anyone can identify at a glance, as familiar to humans as a cat or dog. Dandelions are, quite possibly, the most successful plants that exist, masters of survival worldwide.

Before the invention of lawns, people praised the golden blossoms and lion-toothed leaves as a bounty of food, medicine and magic. Gardeners often weeded out the grass to make room for the dandelions (just the opposite of what most do nowadays). But somewhere in the twentieth century, humans decided that “the dandelion was a weed!” Nowadays, they’re also the most unpopular plant in the neighborhood – but it wasn’t always that way.

Dandelions are also masters of survival. They can take root in places that seem little short of miraculous, and then are impossible to get rid of, as homeowners have found. But why is this plant so hard to kill? It’s partly because they are fast growers. The sunny yellow flowers go from bud to seed in days. Their lifespan is long, too – an individual plant can live for years, so the dandelion lurking in a corner of the playground might be older than the children running past it. The roots sink in deeper over the years, and can go down as far as 15 feet. Like the Hydra who sprouted two new heads for every one that was cut off, the roots clone when divided; a one-inch bit of dandelion root can grow a whole new dandelion. Dandelion leaves can shove their way through gravel and cement, and thrive in barren habitats.

I could go on for pages about the dandelion, but there’s a profound lesson for us in *looking at the resilience and perseverance of the dandelion*.

You are probably already with me in thinking of the “Parable of the Sower” presented by Jesus when He spoke to multitudes from a boat that he was sitting in, no doubt just a little ways away from the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Sound travels well over water when it is reasonably calm and the sound of Jesus' voice was able to easily reach the multitudes.

Let’s take a quick look at **Matthew 13:3-6**.

*3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow.*

*4 "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.*

5 *"Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.*

6 *"But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.*

The seeds that fell upon the path or roadside, as some translations render it, had no soil to send roots into. The seed lay exposed and was spotted by birds that quickly swooped down and made a meal of the seeds. These seeds didn't have a chance to even sprout and send out roots. Jesus explained the meaning of this portion of the broadcast seed. *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart."* (v.19)

Let's look at the explanation of *the next category* of the seed that fell from the sower. *"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles."* (v.20) Tribulation and persecution can involve all sorts of challenges that arise. They can include deception, ridicule from family and friends, spiritual leaders falling away and influencing others to abandon the truth, job losses, etc. All disciples or students of Christ will be confronted with a number of these trying events. *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* (2 Timothy 3:12)

To endure and weather the adversities that come our way, we must have deep spiritual roots. We must be deeply embedded and rooted in the Word of God and supplied with the nutrients that come from God's Holy Spirit. James refers to those *"who endure"* and reminds us of *"the perseverance of Job."* (James 5:11)

We must have a deep understanding of the basic truths of God, continue to partake of them, and be stabilized by making them a part of us. We may suffer loss and injury from life's events, but we will not let that snuff out the eternal life that has been planted within us.

I myself have cut many dandelions off at ground level, but they kept growing and rose up again and displayed those pretty yellow flowers. By analogy, we must have a love of the truth, a love for God, and a love for one another to maintain spiritual health and vitality. "*And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*" (Mt 24:12-13) Others around us may shrivel up and fade away, and unfortunately may even lose that love, but we don't have to. We'll endure *if our roots are deep* and we maintain enduring vitality with proper spiritual nutrition from the true source, God Himself.

So next time you see a dandelion, perhaps these thoughts will come to mind and you can reflect even more on the wonderful truth God has blessed us with.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.



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