

The QBC Daily Nugget September 2, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

LUKE 20:17-18 – But He looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?’ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE SOIL MUST BE PREPARED. We worked a garden when I was growing up back in West Virginia. It was at my grandmother’s house. Looking back now, it wasn’t that big. Oh, it was big enough. Especially for a teenage boy who would rather have been playing football or baseball than working in a garden. Back then, it was huge, like miles long and wide. The time spent in picking corn, weeding tomatoes, digging up potatoes, and all those other vegetables screaming for attention did not exactly cause me to jump with excitement and pleasure. In fact, I think it was painful. As I thought of my gardening days and the soil preparation to get all that vegetable stuff in good position to grow, I pictured what the soil would have said during the plowing and turning over of the dirt. Pretending soil could talk as the rotor tiller churned away and chewed it up, I imagined the soil complaining, “Hey, that hurts. Can you go a little easier here?” Why so deep? I am fine. Just drop some seeds. Ouch. Please can we get this over with a little faster? Why are you being so thorough?”

Do we ever feel that way when this is happening to us spiritually – “And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (**PHILIPPIANS 1:6**). There is a good work being done in each of us by God. It is the work of conformity to His Son preparing us for glory (**ROMANS 8:28-30**). What does this conformity look like? I would suggest we spend consistent time in the Gospels to get to know Jesus so we will get the accurate picture of what we are becoming. I would also suggest we think on the Fruit of the Spirit – “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (**GALATIANS 5:22-23**). When we read this portion of **GALATIANS 5**, don’t be tempted to look at these as just character traits we are to have flow from our lives. Ensure we see Jesus in each one of them. This is what God commits Himself to develop in each of His ransomed children. And do we know what needs to happen in order for this Fruit to grow and be healthy? Just like our physical garden at grandma’s house, we need the soil to be prepared. For the Fruit of the Spirit to take root and flourish, the heart (our soil) must be prepared. God must “churn up” the “dirt clods” of pride, selfishness, spiritual indifference and laziness, and all those other ugly impurities which would choke out the Word which, by the Spirit, produces this wonderful Fruit.

How does He do it? Brokenness. As the soil in a real garden must be broken up, so must our hearts, to include our wills and affections, be broken. We must be weaned from self, the pleasures of the world, and our propensity toward comfort so Christ may reign supreme and do the work only He can do in the human heart – produce life giving Fruit. Yes, this work of brokenness hurts. We might even talk like the soil – “Hey, that hurts. Can you go a little easier here?” God’s love and grace sustains us through the work of brokenness and when we are humbled, meaning the soil is ready, His Fruit will begin to grow to nourish not only ourselves, but others. John Bunyan once wrote, “He that is down fear no fall; He that is low no pride: He that is humble ever shall have God to be his guide.” That is a pretty good description of a prepared soil.

PRAYER: “Lord, help me to respond to Your working in me with willful and loving submission.”

QUOTE: “To be a fruitful branch one must be planted deep in the soil of personal brokenness.”