

## **Bitter Roots**

*Looking diligently lest any many fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. – Hebrews 12:15*

Life is a journey and along the way, we possess control over precious few variables. Two of those variables are our perspective and our attitude. But as we live, things happen. Some of the things that happen improve our trajectory while other things mire us down. Still other things cause heartache and sorrow. Things are done by us, for us, and to us. The things that are done to us create the most significant danger of reacting or responding in a wrong way – a way that displeases God, a way that harms our fellow man, a way that defiles our walk, a way that corrupts our witness, and a way that harms our spirit. The warning in our text today has to do with one of the chief ailments of this nature that can plague believers – bitterness.

A bitter spirit is one that has not accepted God's ultimate authority in some matter. It sees certain circumstances and occurrences through an irredeemable lens and assumes that either God has not seen them, or He is delayed in His response to them. Bitterness is convinced that what has been done that has caused problem or pain cannot be reversed. In many ways, it does not want it to be. Bitterness permits the Adamic flesh to bask in its own self-righteousness. It will not negotiate with overtures of reconciliation, or forgiveness. It wallows in self-pity and anticipates that if the whole truth were known, it would not be so alone. Bitterness feeds off of rehearsals. It loves to replay over and over again the thing that birthed it. And as it does so, it takes root, establishing itself with a deep presence within the soul, and making it difficult to exercise the spirit in the necessary graces of love, joy, and peace, as well as any effectual volitional service such as believable witnessing, heart-felt worship, and heaven-penetrating prayer. What is perhaps even worse is that bitterness is blind to itself. It is so self-justifying and self-absorbed that it makes it difficult for its host to recognize its overwhelming presence without the aid of the Spirit of God.

Thank God there is an antidote. The grace of God can root out any bitterness, no matter how long it has established its beachhead within the heart! The grace of God awaits to restore all the confiscated authority within the soul that bitterness was permitted to usurp. The grace of God reminds us of our Savior, Who committed the keeping of His soul to a faithful Creator. If He did so, we can do the same because His Spirit resides within us. And we must...

Dear reader, are you bitter? Is there any root of bitterness troubling you? Let it go. This thing will eat at you as a canker. It will defile your spirit. Permit God's grace to have its way with you in this thing, and watch the peaceful paths reclaim and overspread the locust-eaten fields within your heart. Our good Father wants to brighten our pilgrimage, and He stands ready to release us from every root of bitterness if we will simply entrust it to Him. -- D. Murcek