

Mark 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

Analysis

Jesus explains rocky-ground hearers: 'these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness.' The emotional, enthusiastic reception ('immediately...with gladness,' εὐθὺς μετὰ χαρᾶς) seems promising but proves superficial. The word 'receive' (λαμβάνουσιν) indicates initial acceptance without depth. This describes false converts or immature believers whose profession lacks root. Reformed theology distinguishes true conversion (involving repentance, understanding, perseverance) from mere emotional response. Genuine faith endures; false profession withers under trial. The warning: enthusiastic beginnings don't guarantee genuine conversion.

Historical Context

First-century evangelism produced similar results—crowds enthusiastically followed Jesus but many abandoned Him when teaching became difficult (John 6:60-66). Early church experienced false professors who initially joined but later departed (1 John 2:19). Church history repeats this pattern: revival produces enthusiastic converts, but testing reveals many lacked root. Modern evangelistic methods sometimes emphasize emotional response over repentance and cost-counting, producing rocky-ground converts. Wise ministry prepares new believers for certain trials rather than promising only blessing.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How can you distinguish between genuine conversion and mere emotional enthusiasm?
2. What practices cultivate deep spiritual roots that sustain faith through trials?
3. How should this warning affect evangelistic methods and expectations?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	οὗτοί	εἰσιν	ὁμοίως	οἱ	ἐπὶ	τὰ	πετρώδη
And	these	are they	likewise	G3588	on	G3588	stony ground
G2532	G3778	G1526	G3668		G1909		G4075
σπειρόμενοι	οἱ	ὅταν	ἀκούσωσιν	τὸν	λόγον	εὐθὲως	
which are sown	who	when	they have heard	G3588	the word	immediately	
G4687	G3739	G3752	G191		G3056	G2112	
μετὰ	χαρᾶς	λαμβάνουσιν	αὐτόν				
with	gladness	receive	it				
G3326	G5479	G2983	G846				

Additional Cross-References

Mark 6:20 (Parallel theme): For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Luke 8:13 (Word): They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

John 5:35 (Parallel theme): He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

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