

# Matthew 13:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

## Analysis

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'And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.' The shallow-soil plants' fate: withered by sun that should nourish them. Without deep roots accessing water, they cannot survive heat. The irony: sun necessary for growth becomes instrument of destruction for rootless plants. Jesus explains (v.21): sun represents tribulation, persecution, offense from the Word. These prove fatal to shallow faith. Reformed theology draws important distinction: temporary faith versus saving faith. Temporary faith receives word with joy, believes for a while, shows initial fruit—but lacks root (genuine regeneration, Holy Spirit's indwelling work). When tested, it withers. Saving faith perseveres through trials because it's rooted in Christ, sustained by Spirit. The parable comforts genuine believers: if you're enduring trials while maintaining faith, this proves authenticity. It also warns nominal Christians: if you'll abandon faith when costly, you never genuinely possessed it. Suffering doesn't destroy true faith; it refines and proves it (1 Peter 1:6-7).

## Historical Context

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Middle Eastern sun is intense—it scorches plants lacking moisture. The image would have resonated powerfully with agricultural audience familiar with failed crops from shallow planting. Jesus identifies 'sun' with persecution and tribulation (v.21). Early church experienced this literally: Roman persecutions sorted authentic from nominal believers. Those with shallow faith denied Christ, sacrificed to Caesar, or lapsed (traditors—those who handed over Scriptures).

Genuine believers endured torture, execution, confiscation of property while maintaining faith. Church history repeatedly demonstrates this pattern: persecution purifies church, revealing true believers. Comfortable Christianity often produces multitudes of shallow-soil professors; persecution reveals the remnant with genuine root. This explains why persecuted churches often show greater vitality than comfortable Western churches: trials eliminate false professors. Modern application: when following Christ costs nothing, beware shallow professions. When it costs everything, remaining believers prove authentic.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does suffering test and prove the genuineness of your faith?
2. What's the difference between faith that endures testing versus temporary enthusiasm that withers under pressure?
3. How should churches prepare new converts for inevitable trials rather than promising only blessing?

## Interlinear Text

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ἡλίου	δὲ	ἀνατείλαντος	ἐκαυματίσθη	καὶ	διὰ	τὸ
when the sun	And	was up	they were scorched	and	because	G3588
G2246	G1161	G393	G2739	G2532	G1223	
μὴ	ἔχειν	ρίζαν	ἐξηράνθη			
no	they had	root	they withered away			
G3361	G2192	G4491	G3583			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 13:21** (Parallel theme): Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

**Isaiah 49:10** (Parallel theme): They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

**Colossians 1:23** (Parallel theme): If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

**Ephesians 3:17** (Parallel theme): That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

**Luke 8:13** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Revelation 7:16** (Parallel theme): They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

**Colossians 2:7** (Parallel theme): Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.