

TROUBLE WITH OPENING LOCKS

One of the biggest challenges my daughter has experienced during her first three years of high school is with the lock on her locker. In Grade 11 she went through three different locks. Even though they were all quality locks, it seemed every three months they would no longer close properly. Grade 10 was not quite as bad as Grade 11 because she only went through two locks that year. Grade 9 saw the same thing happen even though students were not in the classroom the entire year due to interruptions with COVID.

My daughter bought a new lock to start off Grade 12. She tested it several times before the first day of school to make sure it would properly open and close. She had no problem with the lock on the first day until it was time to leave. I was sitting out in my car waiting to drive her home and saw no sign of her even though most students had left for the day.

Around 3:15 p.m. I received a message from her that her lock was not opening. She had tried several times but to no avail. I met her at the front of the school and went in with her to see if I could open it. It had been 40 years since I have tried to open a lock on a locker at BCI. I said a quick prayer before trying the combination and thankfully it did open. Since it was the end of the day, we took the lock home with us to make sure it would consistently open. The only time it opened is when I said that prayer. We tried the combination again in the car, and many times later at home, but the lock never again opened.

This story is a reminder how sometimes we might have difficulty with opening certain things. Locks can pose this challenge for us, but so too can lids on jars. Something else we may struggle with opening is our hearts to receiving God's messages. Jesus spoke about this struggle in the parable about the four soils found in **Mark 4:1-20**. Jesus uses the analogy of seed being placed on soil in this parable in order to describe the following **four ways** people may be open to receiving God's messages in their hearts:

1. Seed that falls on the footpath describes people who allow Satan to quickly take away any message God tries to place on their hearts.
2. Seed that falls on rocky soil describes people who open their hearts to His word temporarily but let that truth fall away from their thinking once problems result.

3. Seed that falls among thorns describes people who hear God's word but allow it to be crowded out by the worries of everyday life and the desire for other things.
4. Seed that falls on good soil describes people who strive to hear and accept God's words and allow it to grow deep roots in their hearts.

This parable is meant for us to examine our hearts in order for us to see how open and receptive we are in allowing God to plant His word and truths in us. Perhaps certain combinations going on in our lives right now such as busyness, indifference, or disappointment may be causing us to keep our hearts locked to hearing God's messages. If this is the case, may we change these combinations and remove any locks that are closing off God's words from changing our hearts.

Day 2 of this school year started off with our second lock already. Thankfully it lasted the rest of that first week. This is week two of this school year. I sure hope it lasts through this week as well, because, if not, this frugal pastor may need to get a second job just to afford locks.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean