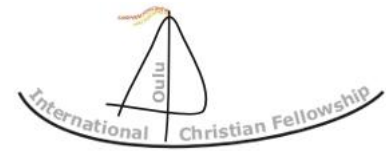


# International Christian Fellowship of Oulu



Date & Time: Sunday, 21.6.2009 at 15.30

Place: Chapel of St. Luke

Topic: Biblical Nature Symbols & Metaphors of Human Life & Faith

Author: Bastian Fähnrich

Sources: Holy Bible New International Version, others see links below

## **Welcome Words & Opening Prayer**

Indoor & Outdoor Worship Meeting (Bastian)

**Topic:** What kind of nature symbols and metaphors are used in the Bible that tell us figuratively truths about human life and faith?

**Symbol:** Something that represents or stands for something else, usually an object used to represent something abstract. The dove as the symbol of the Holy Spirit ([Matthew 3:16](#), [Mark 1:10](#), [Luke 3:22](#), [John 1:32](#))

**Metaphor:** A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison, as in "You are the salt of the earth" ([Matthew 5:13](#))

## **Example:**

**Word of God as a Seed** ([Matthew 13](#))

"The Word of God is like a seed that fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

**Task** (20 min): Let's go outdoors (into nature), look for a nature item (seed etc.) and bring it back indoors, or stay outdoors with it. Go to a quiet place, ponder on the item by searching your Bible for a verse that speaks figuratively about the nature item as a symbol or metaphor with regard to human life and faith.

Later on we all gather in the church, and you are invited to give a testimony about how this nature item figuratively relates to human life and faith. You may share your example on a personal level, or more abstract and general level, for instance, with reference to our congregation etc. Last but not least we'll pray about our examples and sing a few songs that may be related to today's topic of this worship meeting

**Testimonies** about the figurative language in God's Word relating to life and faith (nature symbols or metaphors):

Let's have about 3-5 volunteers to share our examples (10 min) by means of testimonies:

**Examples** (gathered throughout the worship meeting, after carrying out task):

## **Rock and stones:**

Christ as the Rock and Foundation ([1 Corinthians 10:4](#), [Matthew 7:24-29](#), [Luke 6:46-49](#));  
Christ as Foundation, Cornerstone ([Ephesians 2:20](#)) and stumbling stone ([Romans 9:30-33](#));  
Jesus as the living Stone and Christians as living stones ([1 Peter 2:4-12](#), [Matthew 16:18](#)).

**Grass & Weed:** Life is short, people are like grass that withers ([Psalm 103:15](#), [Isaiah 40:7](#), [Matthew 6:30](#)). Evil persons die soon as grass ([Psalm 37:2](#)), and weeds represent sinful people, who will be eternally separated from God and burned at the end times ([Matthew 13:24-43](#)).

**Flowers:** Life and people are going to wither as flowers ([Psalm 103:15](#), [1 Peter 1:24](#)), flowers tell figuratively as the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley about the relationship of a lover and his/her beloved ([Song of Solomon 2:1-2](#)).

**Trees, leaves:** A person who trusts in the Lord is like a tree that is planted nearby water, and it bears fruit and its leaves remain always green ([Jeremiah 17:8](#), [Psalm 1:3](#)). Accordingly, in the end times a fig-tree (person) withers by the curse of Jesus Christ, if it doesn't bear fruit but has only leaves ([Mark 11:13-14](#)).

**Twigs, branches, fruits:** Believers are to remain in Jesus, the true vine, so one won't be cut off as useless twigs and branches. In Christ one is able to bear fruits, like a flourishing tree. God will also prune the branches so that they (believers) may bear even more fruit ([John 15:1-4](#), [Isaiah 18:5](#)). Salvation through Jesus is meant for believers, and the only hope in this life rests in Christ, and He takes away the death sentence ([2 Corinthians 1:9-11](#)).

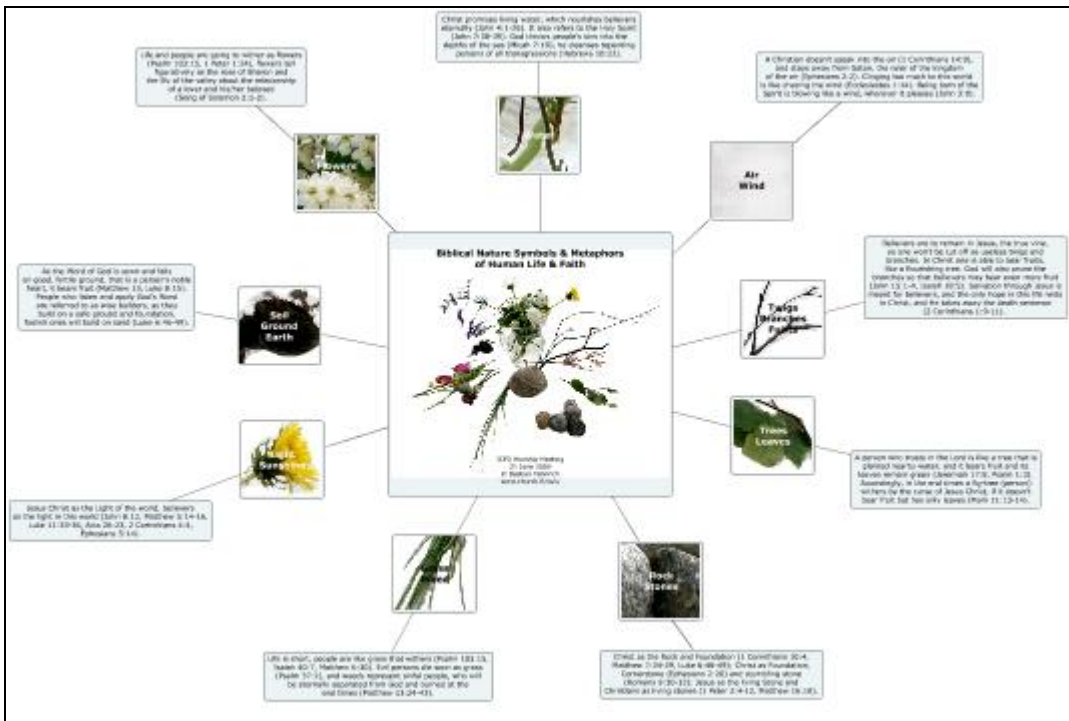
**Soil, earth, ground:** As the Word of God is sown and falls on good, fertile ground, that is a person's noble heart, it bears fruit ([Matthew 13](#), [Luke 8:15](#)). People who listen and apply God's Word are referred to as wise builders, as they build on a safe ground and foundation, foolish ones will build on sand ([Luke 6:46-49](#)).

**Light, sunshine:** Jesus Christ as the Light of the world, believers as the light in this world ([John 8:12](#), [Matthew 5:14-16](#), [Luke 11:33-36](#), [Acts 26:23](#), [2 Corinthians 4:4](#), [Ephesians 5:14](#)).

**Water:** Christ promises living water, which nourishes believers eternally ([John 4:1-26](#)). It also refers to the Holy Spirit ([John 7:38-39](#)). God throws people's sins into the depths of the sea ([Micah 7:19](#)), he cleanses repenting persons of all transgressions ([Hebrews 10:22](#)).

**Air & wind:** A Christian doesn't speak into the air ([1 Corinthians 14:9](#)), and stays away from Satan, the ruler of the kingdom of the air ([Ephesians 2:2](#)). Clinging too much to this world is like chasing the wind ([Ecclesiastes 1:14](#)). Being born of the Spirit is blowing like a wind, wherever it pleases ([John 3:8](#)).

**Concept Map:** (<http://www.theprisoners.org/icfo/bnsmhlf.pdf>)



We figured also that creation as a whole speaks of God, and Christians should always give thanks and worship God with an attitude of gratitude ([Psalm 100](#)). Man is made in the image of God ([Genesis 1:26-27](#)), but only like faithful children one may enter the kingdom of God ([Mark 10:15](#)). We concluded stating that many more examples of symbols and metaphors may be found in the Bible, such as birds, , darkness, fish, fire, thunder, rain, sheep, dog, feathers ([Psalm 91:4](#)), thorns etc.

## **Prayer**

Let's pray about our examples, the truths discovered through nature symbols and metaphors in the Word of God

## **Songs**

Let's choose two or three songs/hymns from the hymn book or song sheet related to the testimonies and the topic of today's worship meeting. ([Creation calls](#), Enter his gates with thanksgiving, etc.)

## **Announcements**

\* Bible Study

Tuesday, 23 June at 19.00

Bastian's place

\* Kellonkartano International Summer Camp

Friday, 24 July – Sunday, 26 July 2009

Kellonkartano Christian Recreation Centre

Info and registration

[www.theprisoners.org/icfo/kisc/](http://www.theprisoners.org/icfo/kisc/)

[www.theprisoners.org/icfo/kisc\\_poster.pdf](http://www.theprisoners.org/icfo/kisc_poster.pdf)

\* Truth Event

Friday, 28 – Saturday, 29 August 2009

Info and registration

[www.yksitotuus.fi/rekry/english](http://www.yksitotuus.fi/rekry/english)

## **Invitation to Fellowship Time**

**Fellowship Time** (Grace)

## **Voluntary Offertory**

(for God-child & Missionaries & Using the facilities of St. Luke's Chapel)

## **Cleaning Up**