**Thorny Soil: Can't Grow Fruit Among The Thorns**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday July 28th, 2019

Text: Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14

### Intro

1. Unfaithfulness is a problem that faces all servants of Christ as much today as in days of old:
   1. NT warnings on unfaithfulness are many: *I Cor. 10:12; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:26-31; II Pet. 2:20-22, and others!*
2. In examining Mt. 13:18-22 we can see Jesus warn of unfaithfulness in the parable of the Sower.
   1. Mt. 13:21; Lk. 8:13: Rocky Soil: Affliction, Persecution, and Temptation
3. The next three causes of unfaithfulness are seen in the Thorny Soil:
   1. Mt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Lk. 8:14: Cares of this world, Deceit of riches, Pleasures of this life (Desire for other things)
4. Unfaithfulness or Unfruitfulness is not something that just happens overnight.
   1. Like weeds choking the grain.
   2. The “thorny soil” describes “Distracted Christians” who let other things slowly choke out the word & importance of Christ in their life *(Not over night!).*
5. What causes a Christian to become unfaithful?

#### Cares of the World

* 1. Mt. 13:22 (Mark 4:19; Lk. 8:14): Worry (Anxiety, Cares) for the affairs of this life!
     1. Mt. 6:25-32: Worries about the present
     2. Mt. 6:34: Worries about the future
     3. Mt. 6:33: Solution – Seek first the kingdom of God & His righteousness!
        1. By placing Christ 1st in our life, anxiety can be overcome.
        2. With Christ 1st in our life, our cares for the things of the world decrease.
  2. How do the cares of the world choke out the word and cause one to become unfruitful?
     1. When concerned (worried) about something it can consume us (our thoughts).
     2. We can get wrapped up in the day-to-day cares to the point of neglect when it comes to studying and meditating on the word of God.
     3. Lk. 10:38-42: We can become like Martha who was “distracted with all her preparations.”
        1. She neglected study with Christ because she was “worried and bothered about so many things.”
  3. If not checked, the “cares of the world” will become a choking thorn rendering us unfruitful!

#### Deceit of Riches

* 1. Mt. 13:22 (Mk. 4:19; Lk. 8:14): “The deceitfulness of wealth” lures so many away.
  2. Riches seem to offer *Security,* but they do not!
     1. Prov. 30:8-9: The god of Money convinces us that we need nothing else but more money: “Who is the Lord?”
     2. I Tim. 6:17: Some fix their hope (trust) in riches, which are uncertain! (Stock market crashes, economic down-turns, etc.).
     3. Mt. 6:19-20; Lk. 12:33: Material things can be taken away by: thieves, destructive forces (rust, moths), inflation, economic depression, poor management, <government>.
  3. Riches seem to offer *Satisfaction,* but they do not!
     1. Eccl. 5:10: Those who love money and are always thinking of how to get it will never be satisfied. They will always need more *(Lk. 12:16-21; esp. 18-19)!*
     2. I Tim. 6:10: Love of money is root of all kinds of evil
        1. *Judas, an apostle, was not immune! – John 12:4-6: He was a thief and stole from his friends!*
        2. *He was willing to betray his friend and Lord for 30 pieces of silver – Mt. 26:14-16*
     3. *Lk. 12:15-21:* Parable of the Rich Farmer. Rich farmer wasn’t satisfied. Wanted more and was called a “fool” by God *(Lk. 12:20).*
  4. Riches seem to guarantee *Success,* but they do not!
     1. *Mt. 19:25:* When the rich young ruler turned away and Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to enter Heaven, the disciples asked, “Then who can be saved?”
        1. They had equated riches with success in this life and the one to come!
     2. I Tim. 6:7-10: Men have fallen into ruin in the pursuit of riches (Shattered their families!).
  5. How does the “deceit of riches” choke out the word and cause one to become unfruitful?
     1. Despite the deceit of riches it actually delivers: Emptiness!
        1. Mt. 6:21: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
        2. Lk. 12:15: *“*Not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions” (Lk. 12:20-21: God called such men a “Fool!”)
     2. Despite the deceit of riches it actually delivers: Destruction!
        1. Mt. 6:24: Christ said you cannot serve two masters.
        2. I Tim. 6:9-10: For the pursuit of money many people, even saints, have brought their lives and families to ruin and destruction! *(Acts 5:1-11)*
        3. *Judas, an apostle, was not immune! – Mt. 27:1-5: After returning the 30 pieces of silver and being rejected, he threw it into the temple and went out and hanged himself! His love of riches brought ruin and destruction!*
     3. Many people fall for the false promises of riches and choose money over God!
  6. The pursuit of wealth has ruined many – can become a choking thorn making us unfruitful!

#### Pleasures of This Life

* 1. Mk. 4:19; Lk. 8:14: “The desires for other things;” “Pleasures of this life”
  2. Pleasure is not all bad: Defined as that which is pleasing to a person.
     1. Relative: what may be pleasure to one may not be to another.
  3. I Tim. 6:17: God supplies us with all things to be enjoyed.
     1. If we strive to live godly we will enjoy good things (Rom. 12:9).
     2. Even good things can become sin if we place them over God (Priorities).
  4. The world is full of pleasures and some are not to be enjoyed – I Jn. 2:15-17
     1. Sinful things should not be engaged in or be found “pleasing” (I Pet. 4:1-3)
        1. I Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21: Sinful pleasures of life can cost one Heaven!
     2. If sin wasn’t fun it wouldn’t be tempting (Js. 1:14-15)
     3. There are sinful “pleasures” we are to avoid (“Flee” – II Tim. 2:22).
  5. How do the “desires for other things” choke out the word & cause unfruitfulness?
     1. We will do what we desire…if we desire “other things” we will neglect study of God’s word and the practice of what is godly!
     2. II Pet. 2:20: Can get entangled & overcome in the “defilements of the world.”
     3. II Tim. 4:10: Can become so distracted by our desires we can become like Demas, who “loved this present world.”
     4. Rev. 2:13-16: The saints at Pergamum stood firm through persecution (NOT Rocky Soil) but failed in temptations in the pleasures of the world! (Thorny)
  6. “Desires for other things” will become a choking thorn that will render us unfruitful!

## Conclusion

1. The “Thorny Ground” is a dangerous place to be:
   * 1. Dangerous because of how subtle it will distract and then destroy us.
     2. Dangerous because we don’t always realize we are being choked.
     3. We need pay heed to what is important in our lives: our time, actions, and thoughts. ***It comes down to priorities!***
2. Fruit can’t grow among the thorns! (Mt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Lk. 8:14)
3. Like a gardener constantly spraying and cutting back the weeds, saints need to be vigilant to cut down the weeds that can become an entanglement and choking hazard!
4. We need to make sure we are killing the weeds in our lives (Mt. 13:23; Mk. 4:20; Lk. 8:15)!
   1. Not to become distracted or “worried and bothered about so many things” *(Lk. 10:41)*
   2. Not to let our earthly treasures possess our hearts and ambitions *(Mt. 6:21)*
   3. Not become entangled in the “lusts of the world” *(I Jn. 2:15)*
   4. Not to let the “root of bitterness” spring up in our lives *(Heb. 12:15)*
   5. Not to neglect God and study of His word *(II Tim. 2:15)*
5. Satan desires to render you unfruitful by filling your life with thorns and weeds!
6. The solution is in Mt. 6:33: “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness!” – Make God our priority in life and we will not be choked out into unfruitfulness! *(Col. 3:1-3: Focus on Jesus)*
7. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized into His name!
8. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
9. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!