

Sowing the Seed II
The Thorny Places
November 9, 2014
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Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Matthew 13:1-9

- 1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.
- 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
- 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, **Behold, a sower went forth to sow;**
- 4 **And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:**
- 5 **Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:**
- 6 **And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.**
- 7 **And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:**
- 8 **But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.**
- 9 **Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

I want to encourage you; that if you were not here last week, to go online and listen to or read last week's message; Sowing the Seed; which was part I.

As we read on, we get to hear the Master Teacher Himself explain to us the parable of the sower.

Mat 13:18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

Mat 13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

Mat 13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

Mat 13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Mat 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

Mat 13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold some sixty, some thirty.

In review:

1. We know for sure that **the seed** in our picture **is the Word** of the Kingdom; vs. 19; it's the Word of God.
2. We know that the sowing is the Word going forth or being preached.
3. We know from the context that in this case as in most cases that the Word is being preached to a mixture of saved people and lost people.
4. We know that the ground in which the seed is sown; described as the wayside, stony places, thorny places and good ground...are metaphors for the heart. Vs. 19, "**that which was sown in his heart.**"

Today, we want to expand on what we learned last week. We are going to move past the first two conditions of the heart mentioned here into which the Word is going forth and concentrate on the last two that inevitably will matter the most.

The heart that is by the way side is the unsaved man who is rejecting the Word. If that is you this morning, unless you change your mind and see the truth for what it is; your entire life will amount to nothing more than kindling for the fires of hell; you simply will not matter; God did not create you to simply not matter.

The hard and stony heart which is sooner or later offended will to some degree matter; mostly in a negative sense because of the damage done in the lives of those who follow them.

There are two hearts in our picture that for the sake of the Kingdom, matter greatly; the thorny ground and the good ground.

Some of you are wondering “why the thorny ground?”

Thorns won't grow without some good soil either; thorns have to put down roots, too. Many believers are caught up in the cares of the world; you know you are saved but you are out of balance and you are overwhelmed.

There is, however, great hope for you. There is good ground down there somewhere. Jesus has changed your heart; He lives in you; He speaks to you; He never gives up on you.

The truth of the matter; the facts of the matter are that every believer whose heart is good ground today; every believer who truly is bearing fruit for the Kingdom today was once overwhelmed and out of balance like everyone else; we all came out of the thorns.

Furthermore, even if you have uprooted your thorns and cleaned up your good ground; there is always another thorn bush trying to pop up.

Our hearts need continual maintenance; good ground doesn't stay good ground unless it is tilled and weeded regularly.

That's one chief reason we all need to be right here every Sunday to worship and to receive the Word that Jesus is sending especially to us.

So today we are going to wade into our thorns with some spiritual Round-up from the Word of God; you are going to love what the Lord will grow in place of those thorns He is about to help you control.

You see, I know something about your heart that Jesus put there when He saved you. Down deep in your heart, you really do want to be good ground; you really do want to see fruit for the Kingdom.

Today I get to do some of my favorite kind of preaching. I don't have to get on anybody's case, I don't have to preach anything very hard to take; I get to preach a 'how to do it' sermon; how to get from point A to point B.

Oh, there will be a little correction here and there; but you can relax; I think you will truly enjoy what you will learn today.

Jesus said there were actually three varieties of thorns that choke the Word.

Mark's account of this parable passes along something else Jesus said that Matthew's account did not:

Mark 4:18-19

18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

So here you have the three varieties of thorns that we must deal with if we are to be fruitful for the Kingdom.

Dealing with the thorns is no simple matter and none of us will do it perfectly; however, understanding the issue will give us the tools we need to deal with the thorns.

First of all, look at:

I. The Nature of the Thorns.

A. These thorns present to us an entire new category of complexity.

1. We Christians like everything cut and dried; we want it all to be black and white.
2. Preachers really like it that way; so much as to sometimes try to make it be that way.

3. "I believe that sin is sin and you ought to call it what it is!"

4. We want a world where every problem can be solved with a trip to the front of the Church where we get on our knees and cry out to God. (And certainly, we ought to get on our knees and cry out to God a lot more than we do.)

5. The trouble is the same people cry out to God over and over without getting the instruction it takes to actually change it when they get back out there in the world on Monday.

6. We want a world in which everything over here on this side is bad....and everything over here on this other side is good.

7. This bad... this good... stay over here where it's good and don't go over there where it is bad.

8. OK, there you go...Christian Life 101 all tied up in a nice simple bundle; now go live your life.

B. Sorry; in the world of the thorns, it's just not that simple.

1. **Mark 12:1** ...A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about *it*, and digged *a place* for the wine vat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2. What do you think that hedge was made up of?

Proverbs 15:19 The way of the slothful *man is* as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous *is* made plain.

3. Thorns are useful and necessary.

Ecclesiastes 7:6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so *is* the laughter of the fool: this also *is* vanity.

4. Thorns make a hot fire; most of the cooking was done over a fire of thorns.

5. The fences that kept the sheep and the cattle out of the vineyards were made up of thorns.

II. The Necessity of the Thorns.

All of these thorns; all three categories of these thorns are useful and necessary.

A. The cares of the world.

2. Food, clothing, shelter; pretty necessary, don't you think?

3. Physical health issues, worry, fear, anxiety; are these not real facts of life that we all must deal with?

4. Material possessions, work, career choices, business, vocational issues, education; are not these real and necessary for life?

5. Social interaction, community events, even sports and other like cares; all necessary to some degree.

B. The deceitfulness of riches.

1. What do you spend most of your waking hours trying to get?

2. Do you love money?

3. Loving money could be a real problem; I think most of you would say, "No, I don't love money, but I do need money."

4. Is there anyone here who does not need money?

5. How much money do you need? Your answer is probably "More than I have." Right?

C. The lusts of other things entering in.

1. Lust is desire.

2. Is it sin to want new things?

3. Anyone here have a smart phone?

4. Anyone here have a new Iphone? Aha, sinner! Sinner!

5. Oh, it can be used for sin...or it can be used for good.

D. Managing those necessary thorns is no lightweight operation.

1. Your job as a Christian living in this world; especially here in America is an extremely difficult balance.
2. Most of what we deal with is not a simple black-and-white / sin-or-not sin issue.
3. If you are an alcoholic, how you handle your addiction may be done in various ways, but the bottom line is that you simply cannot drink.
4. Imagine if you will; someone with a raging alcoholic addiction and for some outlandish reason that person is required to drink three beers or three glasses of wine or three shots of whisky (or whatever your favorite poison was;) but no more, every single day.
5. We are by the very nature of living in this world, addicted to all three categories of these thorns. This alcoholic illustration is a pretty close equivalent of what you must do every day to manage your thorns.

III. The Management of the Thorns.

A. Thorn bush # 1; The cares of this world.

1. Too much involvement and they take over your life; they can and will render you virtually useless in bearing fruit for the Kingdom.

2. Too little involvement and you fail in meeting the basic needs of yourself and your family; which God also requires.

3. Every believer must deal with the cares of this world; too little and you fail; if you cross the line of being wrapped up too much in these cares you fail even worse.

4. And to make things even harder, you don't even know where that line is!

5. You cannot keep the cares of this world in balance on your own.

6. You must stay in the Word; you must stay in fellowship with the Lord; you must study and pray and do so with purpose; every day.

7. You must avail yourself of all the good preaching and teaching you can get; Bible class, Home Teams; some of you listen to the message twice every Sunday and you need it.

8. "Lord show me how to walk today; show me what is too much; Lord show me what is not enough;" every decision, no matter how minor ought to be bathed in prayer and measured by the scriptures; and to do that you have to know your Bible.

B. Thorn bush #2; The deceitfulness of riches.

1. Some of you do well handling money and some of you do not so well.
2. We all want money and we all need money.
3. Most however, even the financially successful ones have their eyes on the wrong thing.
4. Remember the story of Jack and the Beanstalk; remember what Jack was after?
5. Ah, yes; the goose that laid the golden eggs.
6. Everybody has their eye on those golden eggs; they're all after the gold!
 - a. I've got to keep my job; I need the gold.
 - b. I need a better job; I need the gold.
 - c. I'm getting a 2nd job; I need the gold.
7. You need to forget about the gold and go after the goose. (I could have said, if you had the sense God gave a goose...)
8. Money is deceitful; money by its very nature is not designed to be had; it is designed to flow; or in Bible terms, "fly."
Proverbs 23:5 *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.*

9. That's why people who deal in money call it cash flow; it flows in and it flows out; it flows in and it flows out; don't worry about the golden eggs, worry about the goose!

10. That is why the wise of this world educate themselves and prepare themselves and learn commerce and business principles and how to buy and sell; how to keep it flowing.

11. Yet even they are missing the point! God is the source of all real and true and lasting riches.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

12. The riches of the world start here and end here; the riches that come from above start here alright, but they never end!

Matthew 6:19-21

- 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:
- 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
- 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

13. Some of you are starving and neglecting the goose and you just can't figure out why you don't get enough golden eggs.

C. Thorn bush #3; The lusts of other things entering in.

1. Lust is simply desire; lust in itself is not a bad thing.

2. It is not sin nor is it necessarily wrong to desire something.

3. Even sexually; you married couples ought to desire each other; you are supposed to; there is even a place for some of that desire when couples are courting.

4. Neither is it necessarily wrong to want new things.

5. Even if you don't really need it; if God has provided you the proper means to get it and you can enjoy it in a righteous way; I know of nothing in the scripture that says you ought not to have it. (Honey, pastor said I should get a new boat.)

6. There are some questions you probably should ask yourself:

a. Why do I want it? Is it just because someone else has one? Is it to impress the neighbors?

b. Can it be a blessing; can it be used to bring God glory; will it be used for this?

c. Will it potentially cause harm to me or my family or my Church?

d. Will it take away the time that I ought to be giving to the Lord or to my family or to my work? (There went the new boat; or...maybe not.)

e. Have I talked to God about this; have I discussed this with my wife/husband or a wise Christian friend?

7. There are many other questions to be asked, but I think you get the picture.

In Conclusion:

We've all got some thorns in our good ground; some of those thorns need to be removed and some need to be managed; you cannot do this alone.

We need each other; we need standards; we need accountability...and above all else the one thing that sums it all up; we need the wisdom of God.

Proverbs 8:12-36

12 I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

- 13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.
- 14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom: I *am* understanding; I have strength.
- 15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.
- 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth.
- 17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.
- 18 Riches and honor *are* with me; *yea*, durable riches and righteousness.
- 19 My fruit *is* better than gold, *yea*, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.
- 20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:
- 21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.
- 22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.
- 23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.
- 24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth; when *there were* no fountains abounding with water.
- 25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:
- 26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.
- 27 When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

- 28 When he established the clouds above:
when he strengthened the fountains of the
deep:
- 29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that
the waters should not pass his
commandment: when he appointed the
foundations of the earth:
- 30 Then I was by him, as one brought up *with
him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing
always before him;
- 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth;
and my delights *were* with the sons of men.
- 32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye
children: for blessed *are they that* keep my
ways.
- 33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it
not.
- 34 Blessed *is* the man that heareth me,
watching daily at my gates, waiting at the
posts of my doors.
- 35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall
obtain favor of the LORD.
- 36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth
his own soul: all they that hate me love
death.

**The fruitful Christian must dedicate himself
to be a true student of Wisdom.**

**To get started; are you wise enough to
place your trust in Jesus?**