

# Suffocating the Word

Luke 8:14

Nutshell: Life + human nature very easily take us down a path that chokes God's Word right out of our lives.

I. Context: The parable of the soils.

II. Text

Luke 8:14 Now the *seed* having fallen into the thorns: these are the *ones* having heard and going forth- because of *the* **p**reoccupations and **p**lenty and **p**leasures of life- they are thoroughly choked; and they do not carry *on to* completion.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. An outline of Luke to this point

I. About this Letter: So you'll know about this Jesus, 1:1-4

II. Rejoice! The Messiah is born! A boyhood turning point, 1:5 – 2:52

III. John proclaims repentance for Christ's coming, 3:1 – 20

IV. Messiah's Entry Credentials: Baptism and Genealogy, 3:21–38

V. His Initiation: Fasting and Temptation, 4:1 - 13

VI. His Self-Introduction and Hometown Rejection, 4:14 - 30

VII. Jesus: the FIRST MAN with absolute authority **in** Scriptures, and **over** angels/demons, sickness, and nature, 4:31 - 5:11

VIII. Turning-Point Healings, 5:12 – 32

A. Repatriating a leper, 5:12 – 16, touching the unclean outcast to preview His taking of our exile into Himself

B. Forgiving sin, 5:17 – 26, thus declaring His Deity

C. Healing/ renewal of a man's (Matthew's) soul, 5:27 – 32

IX. New and Old Covenants:

A. NC = OC *replacement*, ~~patch-up~~, 5:33–39. NC: Law in ♥.

B. 6:1-11, OC Sabbath *strict*, but intended as a *help*.

X. Picking the 12, 6:12-16; teaching / etc., incl. Tyrites, 6:17-19

XI. Jesus' teaching manifesto: the **SERMON ON THE PLAIN**

- A. The Sermon on the Plain gives the *earthy* evidence of the *spiritual* traits in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt 5-7. Here, the poor are literal and the rich are their haters. Christ's disciples are to love their haters.
  - B. Christ's disciples are to give generously, living by pity
  - C. Only right teaching can produce right living, always convicting *self* first. Only building squarely, exclusively on Christ will survive the floodplains life is lived in.
- XII. Messiah & His Mission Portrayed in His Interactions**
- A. Forecast: A **Gentile** seeks Jesus for a healing, Lk 7:1-10
  - B. Forecast: Hope still held out to **Israel**: Nain widow, 11-17
  - C. Recheck: But is this ↑ the Messiah? Just a healer? 18-23
    - 1. John expected Christ to judge the world, per prophecy
    - 2. Luke uses John to explicitly introduce the Interim in Christ's work, between a 1st and a 2nd coming
    - 3. Jesus' healings forecast an era of extended mercy, especially to the Gentiles- the era we're in now, 24-30
  - D. The Jews rejected John and Jesus on opposite counts, but Wisdom claimed both John and Jesus as her own, 31-35
  - E. Love for Jesus is tied to forgiveness. The sinful woman had both; Simon the Pharisee lacked both, 36-50.
  - F. Many women followed and helped Jesus' ministry, 8:1-3
  - G. Jesus now begins His formal Parable teaching, 8:4
    - 1. Parable #1: The Planter and the Soils, 8:4-8
    - 2. The Explanation's preview: 8:9-10
      - a. Parables put God's kingdom right before men
      - b. But unless God opens our eyes, we won't see it
    - 3. Parable key for this parable: seed = Word.
    - 4. Soil #1: Compacted. Word taken by Satan before penetration.
    - 5. Soil #2: Rock layer just beneath.
      - a. Joyful reception!
      - b. But a trying time proves its lack of root.
    - 6. Soil #3 today.

**Kid-speak:** What's the new way Jesus started teaching where He said "God's Kingdom is like *this*"?

- 7. Remember, we must assess ourselves: What sort of soil/ receptivity to the Word am I?

## Outline:

### Choking Out the Word

- I. People choke the Word by their choices
  - A. The Word is still the Word when we choke it. It just becomes a word of condemnation.
  - B. Our ‘insides’ naturally suffocate the Word because all our ‘air’ is breathed up by other things.
- II. Three ways we choke the Word
  - A. I’m Thinking
    - 1. No meaningful thought-space for the Word
    - 2. What carries my thinking
      - a. Fears/ worries
      - b. Anger/ frustration
      - c. Plans for hurting others
      - d. Selfish desires
    - 3. These can be purely *interior* or responses to what the *World* does to me or for me

**Kid-speak:** We all think, right? Can what we think about keep us from God? Yes! It Do we need to think about God, though?

- B. I’m Acquiring
  - 1. My ambition is in use; unavailable for the Word.
  - 2. My \$ goal is tangible. The Word is not.
    - a. My \$ can *acquire* an intangible goal. 1 Tim 6:17 below.
    - b. It must replace thing-trust
- C. I’m Enjoying
  - 1. My pleasure sensors have acquired targets
  - 2. The Word can’t compete
    - a. Where does our pleasure in the Word come from?
    - b. We must develop that appetite
- B. “Now the *one*” + a preposition, the third descriptive phrase, with “the” referring back to the “seed” from v 11
  - 1. In v 12-13, “the” was plural. The “the” in our v is singular.
  - 2. They *all* go back to “seed” singular in v 11. Agreement with the singular not necessary.
  - 3. Our v isn’t singular in order to agree grammatically
    - a. V 12-13, the *multiple seeds* (“those”) sown by the path and on the rock may allude to the *many opportunities* the Word had to break the surface

- b. V 14, the *single seed* is probably a reference to the *kind* of seed sown: that it is ultimately ONE Word, with or without multiple points of entry
  - c. V 15, will use singular “the” again, showing that this ONE Word can also find a home that conforms to it!
- C. Comparison of the prepositions, v 12-14
- 1. The roadside preposition was “alongside/near/by”
  - 2. The rock preposition was “upon/on”
  - 3. The preposition of our verse is “into/in/among”
  - 4. We see, then, that nearly *any* relationship (preposition) a human may enter into with the Word is one in which the person’s normal unbelief will naturally reject the Word
    - a. Remembering that rejection includes twisting the Word away from its meaning
    - b. Many Word-twisters are very sincere
- D. “Having fallen among thorns”
- 1. Thorns and thistles are the original representation of the hardships of the fallen world, Gen 3: Here they represent the difficulty of getting God *back* into our lives!
  - 2. The thorns grow up “with” the good seed, 8:7
  - 3. The thorns here act mainly like weeds, blocking off the sun and/or sucking up the available moisture and nutrition from the soil, depriving the Word’s roots
  - 4. But perhaps the thorns mean that the pointy spikes discourage help from reaching us
  - 5. The 3 thorny factors Jesus lists are easily related to thorns in our minds

**Kid-speak:** Jesus said that God’s Word is like **seed** that •birds can steal *or* that •has shallow dirt. What’s the 3rd thing that can keep the seed of the Word from growing in our souls?

- E. “These are the ones having heard and **GOING FORTH**”
- 1. “Heard” is a key word here
    - a. It appears to mean heard and at least agreed
    - b. But in Lk 6:47 and 49 “hear” is just the first stage, after which we either do or don’t do what we hear
    - c. More immediately, Jesus was crying out while telling the crowds the parable, “The one having ears to hear, let him hear!” v 8. Real hearing is not automatic.

- d. In v 10, Jesus quoted Isaiah, saying, “Hearing they might NOT UNDERSTAND”
- 2. In context, hearing does not necessarily indicate reception
  - a. Right then and there, Jesus may have been telling His disciples about the crowd
  - b. They had just gone their way, having heard; the cares of life were about to come sweeping over them again, and any changes of direction they were contemplating might have easily been disintegrated, piece by piece, hr. by hr.
- 3. They went their way, back **TO THEIR NORMAL LIVES**
- 4. *When we go our separate ways today, having heard... ?*
  - a. Won't the same disadvantages beset us?
  - ★ b. Yes. The question is whether the **thorns** normally have success *or* whether our **habit** is to fight our way to the sun *and* clear our ground space

**Kid-speak:** We don't live at church, right? So when we go home and work or play, can we forget the Word of God?

### The Three Suffocating Factors

- F. “Because of *the* preoccupations... of life” (I'm Thinking)
  - 1. Usually translated “worries,”
    - a. But the word has no negative inference in 2 Cor 11:28
    - b. The related verb is used positively in Philip 2:20
  - 2. We're probably most familiar with Matt 6:25-34 (6x), Lk 12:22-26 (3x), KJV “take thought”
    - a. It's the Martha word in Lk 10:41
    - b. The one *you* probably hear the most is Philip 4:6, in the congregational prayer
  - 3. Matters that preoccupy us are not necessarily bad in themselves. The word “worries” puts a name on our customary wrong response to those matters.
    - a. It's just that our thoughts are **ALL TAKEN UP** by \_\_\_ (work, relationships, upkeep, etc.). No room left for the Word.
    - b. The evil part of it is the feeling we adopt that life = these pursuits **WITH NO BREAK**
    - c. Our time is easily filled with non-Word items. If we don't *make* time, the Word's not getting in.

**Kid-speak:** The 1st kind of **thorn** Jesus talked about is

worry. When we worry, what else are we doing? Being afraid. If we worry and fear, are we really believing that God can take care of us? What do we need to do instead of worry? Talk to God about it! Start with, “God, \_\_\_ has me worried. Will You please help me?”

- d. Here is *one* of the non-optional aspects to gathering for worship weekly. In weeks where emergencies have wiped out any *specific* interface with the Word, our schedule already includes sitting under the Word
4. It’s a simple concept to understand but no less difficult. We have to **un**-preoccupy ourselves, Isa 26:3.
  - a. The ultimate goal is God and His *Word* on our minds round the clock
  - b. Specifically, we need to identify *worries* that make our minds fret, blocking interface with God
  - c. One or the other is going to win
- G. “Of life” after “pleasures” applies to all 3 chokers: preoccupations, plenty, and pleasures
- H. “*The plenty... of life,*” singular (I’m Acquiring)
  1. “Plenty” is bad 3x in Matt, Mk, Lk (in this parable), + 3 others (see I below). 19x “plenty” relates to spiritual benefits, modified by specific words.
  2. “Plenty” is modern America in a nutshell. We are about the acquisition of riches.
    - a. This is the *perversion* of capitalism
    - b. Capitalism is about the *freedom* to acquire my own wealth
    - c. COVETOUSNESS is when the acquisition becomes a/the *chief concern* for me
  3. Prosperity is only good as it keeps pace with my SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY, 3 Jn 1:2. As long as it does that, my soul will have the advantage vs. its temptations.
- I. The three negative passages
  1. 1 Tim 6:17
    - a. “The uncertainty of riches” obliges rich Christians to help the needy. Pastor Timothy is to told to *command* them so.
    - b. 1 Tim 6:9 guarantees that all who desire to be rich *will* fall into temptation
  2. Jms 5:2
    - a. James addresses the rich, prophesying that their riches were rotted and would be like napalm on their flesh

- b. The rich are the bad guys in James, 2:6. We should not want what they've gotten their way
- 3. Rev 18:17
  - a. This records the destruction of Babylon and of her international commerce
  - ☞ b. Jesus said to make friends for ourselves by means of "unrighteous money," so that when we come to an end, those friends may receive us into eternal tents, Lk 16:9
    - i. Where can our money go as a 'deposit' for Heaven??
    - ii. See 1 Tim 6:18-19 (a commentary on Lk 16:9)

**Kid-speak:** Should we be saying, "Money will get me all the things I want. I want lots of money!?" The Bible says that if we want lots of money, we *will* do bad things, 1 Tm 6:9. (And we may not even get the money, Prov 23:4-5.)

- 4. Either God or riches will win out in gaining our earthly security
- J. "Because of *the* pleasures of life" (I'm Enjoying)
  - 1. All 5 uses of this word are of evil; Tit 3:3; Jms 4:1, 3; 2 Pet 2:13.
  - ♦ 2. At root, pleasures come from God's design of making the *world* pleasant and *us* pleasure-appreciators, 1 Tim 6:17, "all things richly to enjoy"
    - a. Without sin, all pleasure would be fine
    - b. But with sin, any pleasure can be defiled
  - 3. Our normal/usual defilement of pleasure is seen in the NT word "flesh." All you need is skin, and you got sin. (Contact Shai Linne.)
    - a. But eyes and ears are also made of flesh
    - b. And the "pride of life" is just the attitude that my mighty flesh is what carries me along
  - 4. Yes, the Greek phrase for "of life" is also found in ⚡ 1 Jn 2:16, 1 Pet 4:3 ("time of life"), and 2 Tim 2:4

**Kid-speak:** When food is good, what should we say? "Thank You, God! You were really smart and nice to make food so tasty!" But what if we don't thank God? We're saying, "All I want is the tasty food! I don't need God!"

- 5. Prov 15:15 lets us know as a matter of fact that life CAN be

enjoyed fairly non-stop (per this v, Jesus was called a man of sorrows, not a man of joys, Isa 53:3)

- a. For an *unbeliever*, constant enjoyment is all he'll need to block God forever
  - b. For a *believer*, his joys in God should make life a banquet, at least on one plain, Philip 4:4
  - c. His knowledge of sin should make life a sorrow on another plain, Matt 5:4
6. So- pleasures: Food, entertainments, etc.
- a. They don't automatically block us from God
  - b. *But we don't automatically keep them from it either*
  - c. Unless we keep them from blocking God out, *they will*
7. Unless we exercise joy in Christ, it cannot crowd out other joys
- K. "They are thoroughly choked." Start here next time

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")  
Do I add envy to the burden of my crutches?

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?**  
**How have I lost righteousness?**  
Have I recognized the dangers of worry? Of wealth? Of fun?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
I will examine how MY idolatries want to choke God out.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**  
I will make the Word the prominent factor- period.

Wrap-up: I'm **thinking**; I'm **acquiring**; I'm **enjoying**. The first two we have to do and the third one we normally do. *Regular life is all it takes to be an idolator*. Replacing God as PRIME FACTOR in life is idolatry.

When God is lord, we can see how empty the idols are!  
That is a great incentive! Open eyes: seeing things as they really are.

Matt 6:25-34 is full of incentives. Latch on!