

Sunday, June 9, 2013

The sown word and the quality of the soil (4)

Third: Thorny ground:

+ This **ground is obviously fit for planting**, but unfortunately **thorns negatively affect its fertility** so it becomes unfit to grow the seeds. This is the same as a person that God gave him a good heart and has good intentions and a good spiritual aptitude. However, he became complacent and allowed the thorns of sin to enter his life so they spread and consumed all his energy. When the seeds of the word of God fall on his heart they choke from the thorns and become unable to grow.

+ There is a **dangerous trick** that the devil spreads in the minds of people, in short, the devil tries to make us think that we can have **both thorns and good plants in our fertile land** faltering between two sides, earthly and Godly desires. Or that we can have a spiritual life while keeping our worldly cares and fulfill our lustful desires. **The natural outcome of this flawed situation is that the spiritual aspect is choked within us and no good fruits come out of our ground.**

+ In His explanation of the parable, the Lord Jesus showed us that thorns come in three types:

The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things, (Mark 4:19). Let's contemplate up on these three types:

1- The cares of this world:

+ We must realize the **difference between taking care of, and excessively worrying about, matters** in our lives. Taking care of a matter is to pay attention to and take responsibility of accomplishing the task at hand. In taking care of things, we ask for God's help and do our best without slacking off. Meanwhile we submit everything in the hands of God who supports our weakness with His mysterious power. Worrying about worldly things is to be excessively preoccupied with everything including future matters or things that are out of our control while God is completely absent from our planning process. This of course creates fear, anxiety, tension, and sometimes sadness and depression.

+ In His explanation of this parable, the Lord Jesus reveals to us that the cares of this world are thorns that choke the word so it becomes fruitless in our lives. **The cares of the world make us too busy to contemplate upon the word and overwhelm the spiritual aspects that nurture us. Also, worldly cares are contradictory to faith** without which the word of God cannot come to fruition. **Faith is to trust in the word and conduct ourselves according to it.** If worries and troubles pileup on us without putting them back on God as they come to us, our faith will be weakened and the spiritual seeds will choke within us.

+ Let's place these consoling verses always before our eyes so that worries don't pileup on us one day and choke the voice of God within us: *"Cast your burden on the Lord, And He shall sustain you;"* (Psalm 55:22), *"casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."* (1 Peter 5:7), *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28).

2- the deceitfulness of riches:

+ God gave us **money as a means for living** on earth. We should not lose sight that money **sometimes becomes a goal** in our lives. Money **should not be a goal because it is temporal** and will vanish. When the heart becomes attached to money, it starts deviating towards many evils such as: **haughtiness, hardheartedness, greed, vainglory, and condescendence towards others. It can also lead to the love of worldly glory, fame, and the love of the first seat and the large portion.** These are all **entangling thorns that choke the seeds of the word** when they fall on the heart and consequently they don't bring fruit.

+ When the **love of money** overpowers the heart, money will take precedence over God. Then we become **preoccupied with other things such as increasing the size of our bank accounts, managing money, and focusing too much on our outlook, instead of being interested in following the commandments of God and growing His love in our hearts.** When the seeds of the word fall on that type of heart, they choke since all the nutrients of the soil are consumed by the thorns of deceitful riches.

+ Therefore, we need to place the following important verses before us and live by them so we can protect our ground from the thorns of deceitful riches: *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* (1 Timothy 6:10), *"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"* (1 John 3:17), *"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"* (Hebrews 13:5), *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another."* (Romans 12:10).

(to be continued).

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