

Parable of the Sower

Lesson 4

Psalm 86:11; Mark 4:7, 18-19; Romans 12:2;

2 Corinthians 11:3; 2 Timothy 2:15

August 6, 2023

Thorny Ground Part 3

INTRODUCTION

In the parable, Jesus speaks of seeds that are not sown in good soil but fall among thorns that grow up and choke out the intended plants so they do not bear fruit. In the same way, His word can land on an unaccepting heart and bear no fruit. His word is good, but the attention of the heart is too divided.

The “thorns” in our hearts are the many things of this world that compete for our attention with God’s word. These things take our time, our thoughts, and our devotion away from Him, such that we occupy ourselves primarily with worldly matters.

In these passages, the Spirit speaks to our hearts, reminding us to turn from being led astray, and instead turn back to allow God’s word to transform our hearts and minds.

Memory verse: “Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise, but as wise.”—Ephesians 5:15

Pray, and read the passages listed above. What questions or observations do you have about them?

INTERPRETATION: What do the passages mean?

1. Jesus interprets the parable of the thorny ground for the disciples and tells them plainly what is meant by his story. What do the seeds represent? What do the thorns represent? (Matthew 19:23; Mark 4:15-20; 1 John 2:15-16)

2. What is meant by “conform to the pattern of this world” in Romans 12:2? Conforming is contrasted with “renewing of your mind”. How is the latter accomplished? (Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:14)

3. Paul is concerned that the Corinthian church would be led astray (2 Corinthians 11:3) and adjures the Ephesians to live wisely (Ephesians 5:15). In light of this, what do you think Paul meant by telling Timothy to do his best to present himself to God as “one approved” in 2 Timothy 2:15?

4. The Psalmist (Psalm 86:11) prays to God for an undivided heart. How does division in the heart relate to the thorns choking out God's word in Jesus' parable in Mark 4:18-19? (Jeremiah 32:38-41; 1 Corinthians 7:35)

APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?

1. We are to "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and live "on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Have you set aside time each day to spend focusing solely on God through prayer and Bible study? If not, why not?

