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(Part One) Seed beside the Road: Hardheartedness and Spiritual Warfare
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(Part Three) Soil with Thorns: False View of the Greatest Good
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Review:

1. The parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-23; Mark 4:2-25; Luke 8:1-19).
 - a. This is the first parable concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 13:11) and the kingdom of God (Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10).
 - i. The messianic kingdom was anticipated by the Jews (Isa. 9:6, 7; Jer. 31:31-34; Dan. 7) and offered and rejected at the first advent of Christ (Matt. 3:2, 12:22-50; Mark 1:15). Jesus began teaching mysteries about the kingdom after he was rejected (Matt. 13:11).
 - ii. The mysteries pertain to the addition of Church Age believers to the kingdom, but they do not nullify any promises made to Israel (Matt. 13:52).
 - b. Proper understanding of this parable will aide in understanding all other parables and the word of God in general (Mark 4:13); this is not by way of transferring symbolic words to every parable. (Luke 8:6, cf. 6:48)
2. The soil alongside the road: Hardheartedness and Satan (Mark 4:14), the Evil One (Matt. 13:19), the Devil (Luke 8:12)
 - a. A hardhearted person will reject the Word of God, whether that person is a believer or not.
 - b. This person is either deceived by arrogance (religious or secular system) or knowingly in pursuit of something that is in conflict with God and Christianity (a believer that refuses to listen to certain doctrines).
 - c. Satan by his system takes away the Word, but it is the condition of the heart that allows him to take it away.
 - i. The ultimate issue is attitude about truth as such (2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rom. 1:25).
 - ii. How does this not conflict with freewill (2 Cor. 3:12-4:4; Acts 17:26, 27)? Every rational being has an intellect that at some point realizes the existence of God (Rom. 1:20). To stop seeking truth in order to justify something false is unnatural according to the nature of the intellect. God holds people accountable for what they do with their intellects. To reject God is irrational.
 - d. Satan's method of removing the word of God:
 - i. Spiritual warfare is engaged in the realm of ideas (2 Cor. 10:3-5).
 - ii. Satan does attempt to deceive the mind through guilt, shame, and suffering (2 Cor. 2:4-11; 1 Pet. 5:8-10).
3. The Rocky Soil: The Temporal Believer and Christian Suffering
 - a. This believer is excited about salvation and all the blessings from God.
 - b. This believer does not reciprocate God's love. Christ suffered for the believer but the believer will not suffer for Christ. This believer has not root in himself. This is a selfish person that lacks virtue.

- c. Suffering involves loss or denial of a good. The value given to the good determines the attitude toward the loss (Phil. 3:8; cf. 1 Cor. 3:15).
- d. Suffering and joy are compatible (2 Cor. 7:4, 8:2; Heb. 10:32-34).
- e. Suffering is endured with joy due to hope in the eternal (2 Thess. 1:4-7; Matt. 5:10-12; Rom. 8:16-18; 2 Cor. 4:7-12, 17).
- f. Suffering for Christ should be viewed as a privilege and a gift from God (Acts 5:41; Phil. 1:29; 1 Peter 2:18-21, 3:14, 17, 4:1, 12-14, 19, 5:8-10).
- g. Throughout Scripture examples of suffering are paired with the good that results from them. The right attitude in suffering always brings glory to God. It reveals God's worthiness to be served, praised, and loved. Love has two main aspects: desire for the good of the one loved and desire to be united with the one loved. One way of pursuing good for God is in pursuing ways in which to glorify God; ways that reveal His worthiness to be praised (Hab. 3:17, 18; Job; 2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Soil with Thorns: False View of the Greatest Good

1. Seed among the Thorns: the Distracted and Preoccupied Heart.
 - a. The soil among thorns is not necessarily unfertile soil; it is soil that is occupied. Likewise, the heart would be fertile for fruitful production of the Word if it was not already occupied.
 - b. This believer hears accurate teaching but has an inner conflict when it comes to application.
 - c. The root problem is that the temporal issues are dominant in the heart.
 - d. If this believer decides to remain in a local church, he will either choose one that promotes his pursuit, or become deaf to any teaching that would hinder his pursuit.
 - e. This fragmented believer will not be able to pursue God and temporal goods, and therefore, self-deception in one way or another will be necessary to avoid ending up in a mental institution.
2. Worries of the World:
 - a. Worry involves a mind focused on issues that have a heightened level of importance. These issues are almost always in the realm of the unknown.
 - b. Not all worries are bad. Worry for things pertaining to God can be a result of loving God and seeking to please Him (2 Cor. 2:4, 11:28; Phil. 2:19, 20).
 - i. Worries that stem from love for God and love for others are healthy and should lead to prayer and a closer relationship with God.
 - c. Worries of the world are worries that may be legitimate concerns but are primarily temporal issues.
 - d. Since worries of the world can be legitimate, the key is to never let them be excuses for not serving the Lord. One must learn to use God's resources to deal with worries (Phil. 4:6, 7; 1 Pet. 5:7).
 - e. Mary and Martha demonstrate both sides of the parable (Luke 10:39-42).
 - i. Martha asks Jesus if he even cares (Luke 10:40).
 - f. Worries are often a result of being too busy (Ex. 5:9).
 - i. We must order our lives in ways that promote undistracted devotion to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32-35).
3. Deceitfulness of Wealth:

- a. A person in pursuit of wealth is often blind to his wasted life (Eccles. 4:8, 5:10-16, 6:1-9; Psalm 49:5-12).
 - b. Wealth obtained can be source of pride and arrogance and lead to a god-complex (Ezek. 28; Prov. 18:10, 11; 1 Tim. 6:17)
 - c. There is nothing wrong with working and making a lot of money. There is nothing wrong with being rich. There is everything wrong with working merely for the pursuit of riches. Money is not evil. Greed and covetousness are evil (Col. 3:5).
 - d. Wealth always has the potential to make living for God more difficult (Matt. 19:16-26; Mark 10:21-30; Luke 18:22-25).
 - i. The more you have, the more you worry, and the less you see a need for salvation.
 - ii. Likewise, as a believer, the more you have the less you see a need for the spiritual life (Rev. 3:14-22).
 - 1. “Have need of nothing” included God and the spiritual life. Material wealth blinded them to their spiritual poverty.
 - 2. Contemporary Christianity often gauges God’s approval of the spiritual life by the material “blessings” obtained.
 - 3. How often does a believer consider his spiritual life when asked, “how are you?”
 - e. Pursuit/desire for wealth opens the door to various other types of evil. This is why it is a root. (1 Tim. 6:9-11).
 - f. Those who are wealthy might not be pursuing wealth, but they are given instruction to protect from specific problems that arise from being wealthy (1 Tim. 6:17-19).
 - i. (1) Don’t be conceited about your wealth, (2) hope in God and not in wealth, (3) do good, (4) be rich in good works, (5) have a generous attitude, (6) give generously, (7) do steps 1-6 with the view of storing up treasures in heaven.
 - ii. By the way, God gives all things to be enjoyed.
4. Hedonism: the Pursuit of Pleasure and Desires for other Things
- a. What you pray for reveals what you desire in life. Many Christians actually pray that God will aide them in their spiritual adultery (James 4:1-3).
5. The overall cure is to orient to the greatest good. “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” only works when the heart treasures God and eternal rewards (Matt. 6:19-34).
- a. Occupation with temporal worries, wealth, and pleasures of life indicate that God is not the greatest Good.
 - b. If Jesus is teaching that the pursuit of temporal goods will choke the accurate teaching of the Word of God so that the one hearing will have no fruitful production in his life, then it stands to reason that accurate teaching does not include pursuing God for temporal blessings.
 - i. Trying to build up enough faith to provide for the things we worry about is not the solution. The problem isn’t that we are worried. The problem is what we are worried about.
 - ii. Trying to trust that God will make us wealthy is not the solution. The problem isn’t that we don’t trust God enough. The problem is trusting God for a good that our hearts desire more than Him.

- iii. We should not seek His kingdom and righteousness because it is a formula to get temporal blessings. That entire passage and promise was made to free us from worry, not to find a source of attaining what we worry about.