

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 106

May 14, 2021

Well, thank you for joining us again for another edition of the Mind of Christ. We are going to continue our study today of the parables. If you are following, it is in A. T. Robertson's, "The Harmony of the Gospels, in Section 64. It is a very, very long section. This is our third recording in this section; and it won't be our last. We have been considering a few things about the parable. We've been talking mostly about the explanation Jesus is giving to the apostles that is found in **Matthew 13:10** and following. So today we're going to get back to the parable itself and look at part of it; we won't look at all of it, and we're going to get into some detail. Now remember that in the very first part of Matthew 13 Jesus *gives* the parable, then He gives some explanation of why He speaks in parables, and then He is going to give an explanation of the parable itself which starts in verse 18. We'll be jumping back and forth between **Matthew 13:1-9** and **Matthew 13:18-23**. We may even go out to Mark and Luke to get a few things, too, to help us have a complete understanding of this section.

Thank you for joining us today. We are studying all that Jesus said and did in the gospels and I am using the *New American Standard Bible* for this class as it such an in depth study of God's Word. You may want to hit the pause button or you may want to take notes; there are a number of things that you may want to do to get all the good out of this. So, back to the actual parable itself...

Matthew 13:1-9 is The Parable of the Sower; and its explanation is in **Matthew 13:18-23**. **The seed sown** is the word of the kingdom according to **Matthew 13:19**. Mark simply says "the word" in **Mark 4:4** and Luke calls it "the word of God" **Luke 8:12**. Does Jesus have in mind the "entire Bible" and in addition, any other type of "word" ... audible word, the word from nature that reveals God, the conscience of a person, examples of others who are living out the word? What all does Jesus have in mind here?

Well, I'm just asking the question because we're thinking here of what are we sowing into the hearts of people. The designation kingdom is the only specific other than it is a word that if sown in "good soil" produces a crop. It is also a word that can be stolen by Satan. It needs roots to grow and it can be crowded out by worries and wealth noting the emphasis of what Jesus Himself and John preached. It was the Gospel of the Kingdom, including the mandate to repent and believe in the one who had been sent, and to be baptized, and it seems clear that the *word has much to do with conversion, dying to self, and growth*. All of that seems to be obvious and included in the idea of sowing the word of God.

It is also clear that there are words in God's word that can be understood and applied to our lives without producing any significant value to salvation. What we're going to learn here is that there are certain words that we apply to our lives that never result in anything to do with our salvation because they weren't applied in the right way. We must be sure we plant the seed that has the power to save and to transform. We have to be sure what we're actually planting in someone's heart because we can plant things in peoples' hearts that may be right and they may be good, and they may be true, but they may not be *transformational!* They may not have the ability to save people.

There is a critical moment or moments in our lives when we *hear the word*. If it does not produce understanding at that moment, Satan, or some satanic influences is ready to remove it so it cannot do its work. But in one sense *it is* doing its work; it is separating one from the other ... the insiders from the outsiders.

In Matthew 10 the critical moment occurred when the apostles knocked on someone's door. Many get more chances than just simply one knock on the door, though I wonder if there is a law of diminishing return sometimes. Some get one chance and they make the most of it. Jesus' attributes the actions to the **evil one**. In other words, the birds that come down and take the seed off of the pathway soil; He attributes that action to "the evil one". The word is *poneros* and it is used here with a definite article the evil one. **Matthew 13:38** Jesus says that the 'tares' are the sons of **the evil one**.

In **Ephesians 6:16** it speaks of the flaming missiles of **the evil one**. In **1 John 2:13** the young men have overcome '**the evil one**,' and also again in **1 John 2:14**. In **1 John 3:12**, Cain was of the evil one ... Cain who killed his brother. In **1 John 5:18** the one who is born of God is kept by God and '**the evil one**' does not touch him. The actions of the evil one is described as "snatching away" 'harpazo' (αρπαζω) meaning to seize, to catch, catch away, to pluck, to pull up. We get the word harpoon from this Greek word ... it's appropriate. Large fish and mammals are 'harpooned', a spear with a line attached to it in order to pull them out of the safety of their element like water in order to destroy them. Neptune or Poseidon has a trident or a three-pronged spear like a pitchfork but for a totally different purpose. It's also used in battle as a weapon.

In Jude 23 our job is to try to save people by snatching them out of the fire. It's almost like we're trying to harpoon them, pulling them out of the fire; a contrast to Satan snatching the word from the soil. Our job is to snatch people out of danger; Satan is snatching the word of God out people's hearts!

In **John 10:28-29** the sheep who hear Jesus' words are his true sheep compared with the disciples to whom the secrets of the kingdom were given are in possession of eternal life. They have a knowledge of the Father and the Son and they shall never perish and no one is able to snatch or to harpoon them out of the Father's hand. The Father's hand is comparable to the seed in the good soil. It is a place of protection where someone can grow. In verse 29 the Father is greater than all, stronger than the strong man. Once those have bound the strong man, and have been released from him, then they are given to Jesus and they're kept safe in the Father's hand and our Father is strong enough to keep us from being stolen and possessed again. But it can't just be a cleansing; it must be a filling up lest seven more demons stronger than the first come and set up shop in your or my life.

So when we are snatched out of the fire; when we are put into the hands of God, we then are in a state of protection. But when Satan comes and he snatches the word of God out of our hearts, then we're vulnerable and in danger.

In **John 6:15** when the crowds wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him a king, they were trying to harpoon Him. They were trying to control the sovereign Lord to rule the king. They wanted the Lord to rule the King. The word harpoon is 'harpazo' (αρπαζω).

In **Acts 8:39** the Spirit snatches away Philip after the Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch. **Acts 23:10** Paul was taken by force out of an angry crowd for his safety. See this idea of harpazo, the snatching away of something, there is usually some external force involved. **2 Corinthians 12:2** a man, probably Paul himself, was snatched up and caught up to the third heaven. In verse 4 he was caught up to Paradise. He didn't fly. He was pulled up by force outside of himself.

In **1 Thessalonians 4:17** at Jesus' return, someone is going to be caught up into the heavens when Jesus returns. This is often called the Rapture which really comes from a Latin word. It is a Latin word that is translating this word 'harpazo'. **Revelation 12:5** Jesus is called up to God in that particular text. So the catching up or the snatching away, there is an external force in this case in the parable it is Satan, who is snatching the word of God out of the hearts of all the hearing of the people.

It's also interesting that even though the pathway soil is harder, and the birds eat it off the surface Jesus says it is still sown in the heart in **Matthew 13:19**. Hard hearts have a level of understanding but there are two levels of understanding. One merely understands the concepts or the words; the other is convicted in their understanding; a combination of word and faith, with the convicting work of the spirit involved.

Now the Rocky soil has not much soil. Jesus stresses the immediacy of the response. Immediately they sprang up. So when He talks about the rocky soil He says that the seed falls on that soil, it has a little bit of soil there and the plants immediately spring up. But He seems to indicate that it was because the soil was shallow that they sprang up quickly. How can shallow soil cause seed to germinate quickly?

Well I checked this out and the web confirms that seed germinate quickly, generally in shallow soil. But the key is whether there are rocks under the shallow soil, or more soil. The reason is that the warmth of this soil can make the seeds grow faster in it as long as other factors are present. Could the rocky soil person be responding to the warmth, if you will, of Jesus; Jesus being likeable, new and exciting but they're not really listening to Him. Jesus was probably a kind of charismatic, He was a charismatic person. At least his personality was one of the love and the concern and the care He had for people. People were attracted to Him. But perhaps they didn't listen very deeply to what he has to say.

So Jesus says that the man hears the word, or the logos, and receives it with joy. This idea of joy means with cheerfulness, with calm delight, with rejoicing. In **Matthew 13:44** concerning the man who finds the treasure in the field, it is from joy over it and he goes and he sells what he has and he buys the field.

Jesus knows us. There is an initial joy or excitement in many first encounters we experience in many. With all thanks offerings we immediately have a joy about oh, I found this something wonderful or I've heard this new artist. You know, we're like that. We immediately experience some temporary joy in something. We experience this daily in some newfound band, or store, or car, organization or job or whatever it is, but we are over it pretty quickly.

Occasionally you will see someone latch onto something and obsess over it; a hobby, a group. It's usually because we attach our identity to it and bond so tightly that we can't imagine detaching from it. It is common in psychology. It's called "attachment theory". I want to consider how this plays into our attachment to Jesus from immediate joy to life-long following. How do we go from this idea of immediate joy to a sustained lifetime of following of Jesus? How do we stay attached to Him?

Jesus describes the problem with the rocky soil man. He has no firm **root** in himself but it's only temporary. "No **root** in himself" . . . what does that mean? **Ephesians 3:17** Paul urges his readers in prayer to be strengthened with power through the Spirit in the inner man. Why? It's so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and that you being **rooted** and grounded in love; this idea of being **rooted** and grounded is getting at the same idea here; that you don't want a temporary grounding in Christ. What a rich correlated passage pulling together the elements of the work of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling Jesus, love and faith all occurring in the inner man . . . with all of those ingredients coming together. So, if you see these elements there that he's describing in **Ephesians 3:17**, then you will see what it takes for the seed of the word of God to actually find his proper place, the good soil, so that it can grow. In **Colossians 2:5** Paul speaks of a two-fold stability of faith in Christ; receiving Christ and secondly, walking in Him. These are doable because one is 'firmly **rooted**'. A firm **root** is essential to continued growth and production of fruit to the stability of the plant. If you don't have a firm **root**, the plant is not going to last.

Other mentions of the word "**root**" are in **Matthew 3:10**. John says that the axe is laid at the **root** of the trees. Trees not planted in Jesus but in tradition, they're going to be cut down . . . even at the root. **Mark 11:20** talks about the fig tree that was cursed; it was withered from the root up. In **Romans 11:16-18** if the root is holy, the branches are holy too. "If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are as well. ¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you." The rich root of the olive tree; the root supports you. The branches do not support the root, but the root is so important. So, this seed that fell upon the rocky ground could not be rooted. In **Romans 15:12** Jesus is the **root** of Jesse. When the tree was just a stump, the **root** was still good and Jesus sprang up. In **1 Timothy 6:10** the love of money is the **root** of all kinds of evil. In **Hebrews 12:15** he mentions the root of bitterness springing up within us. In **Revelation 5:5** the **root** of David is mentioned and in **Revelation 22:16** as well.

The **root** is foundational to the plant; *it is key*. How do you recognize whether the word of God that you speak is really taking **root**? In other words, when I speak the word of God, how do I know it is taking **root** in a person's life . . . the person who is hearing me speak? How do I know that? Is someone really hearing it; understanding it? Jesus uses the word 'temporary', the word *proskairos* (προσκαιρος) means "for the occasion only", "for a while", "endure for a time" or "for a season", it's "temporal". How true! We can be so "into" something for the occasion and so quickly cool off and forget and dismiss it and walk away. God does not want "occasional" Christians. He wants us "*firmly rooted*" for all time.

In **Matthew 13:21** Jesus gives a couple of specific causes for the rootless Christian. “Yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.” The first is “affliction”, and the second is “persecution” because of the word. “Persecution” in the Greek is “diogmos” (διωχος).

What is “affliction”, “thlipsis” (φλινσις). The word for affliction means pressure. It means a narrow place, something that causes suffering or tribulation. In **John 16:21** it compares to childbirth. “Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world.” The anguish of when the child goes through the birth canal; there is affliction; there is a narrowing process that causes suffering. But afterwards it can be remembered no more and the mother returns to joy. This is kind of the opposite of Matthew 13. There is no recovery in Matthew 13. Instead of temporary joy we have temporary affliction and a return to joy in this particular case.

In **2 Corinthians 2:4** Paul wrote out of much affliction and anguish of heart because of their situations. “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.” In **Acts 7:10** in speaking of Joseph, he was rescued by God out of his afflictions and granted wisdom and favor in the sight of Pharaoh. In **Romans 5:3** it goes as far as to say that we should exalt in our tribulations because we know that they produce perseverance, character and hope. In **2 Corinthians 1:4** Paul adds that we are comforted by God in all our afflictions. **Hebrews 10:32-33** speaks of those Christians who endured reproaches and tribulations. Also, notice in verse 32 conversion is called enlightenment, a point where the light bulb goes off and we get into a person who hears the word, and expresses joy publicly. But then, when that happens, when they receive the word and they have great joy, it calls attention to themselves and it invites scrutiny, criticism and perhaps scorn and ridicule by others, so there may be someone who immediately receives the word of God, they get excited about it, and then they start rejoicing about it and telling people about it and then somebody comes along and pours cold water on them. They may simply criticize them and say, ‘are you crazy’ and it just takes the joy out of what they have found.

This pressure makes one question himself as to whether they really are smart to believe in Jesus. If their “purchase” or “acceptance” or “commitment” was really wise; they may be questioning that. Like we say, it is like pouring cold water on someone or raining on someone’s parade. **Luke 8:13** adds the word “temptation” as a cause of falling away. We’ve talked about the idea of temptation in a previous message back in the temptations of Jesus.

Matthew’s second word is persecution. One is affliction; that can cause a person to grow up quickly and then fall away. The other is persecution. The word “persecution” means to chase, a pursuit. I can’t remember where we talked about his before but we have covered that before. It is similar to affliction in that others or circumstances crowd in; they may herd us into a more confined space when at first, we felt less free and more stifled. It is the press to stay conformed to the world instead of being transformed. Note that the persecution has some relations to the “word”. It is not merely a ‘streak of bad luck’.

Accepting the word of God and believing it may cause persecution. Perhaps a “warning label” is needed. Jesus *did warn* His apostles of this. Read John 14 through 16, those three chapters, and he connected this with the need and the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to be in our lives. Do we warn folks how hard following Jesus can be? If we only stress the blessings we have only told half the truth.

The term “falls away” in this text may evoke in us a theological issue about the possibility of a person losing their salvation or falling from grace. This involves the Calvinistic doctrine of “perseverance of the saints” but is this passage describing a ‘saved’ person? This person hears the word and receives it with joy. Does this equal ‘salvation’? Well, not necessarily, but how do we know and was Jesus even trying to describe exact points of “savedness” in this text?

We have often interpreted this parable to say only one of the four are saved. I doubt these percentages but the idea of ‘falling away’ does seem to imply someone falls away from ‘something’. So, what do they fall away from? If not salvation, then what; from their study of the Bible, from their interest in Jesus, are they really disciples at this point? Currently, we have a young lady at church who has studied God’s word and is being prevented or delayed from baptism because her mother who is Catholic thinks her decision is impulsive so an arbitrary date has been set to see if she is still serious about the matter. So far, she’s sticking to her guns. So, what is the truth here? Is this young lady a disciple yet? The context here is hard, but what of other places like **Galatians 5:1-4**. Those who are *obviously* saved people who go back to a salvation by ‘law approach’, fallen from grace. To go from one place to another you have to move from one to another. So, at least here, this man falls from joy to despair; from embracing the word to now distancing himself from the word.

The word in Greek for “falls away” is a word that means “offended”. We get the word scandal (σκανδαλον) from it. It is “offended”. It is used 13 times in Matthew. Let me just run through those with you quickly so you may have them at hand: It’s found in **Matthew 5:29-30** about if you eye or hand make you stumble then you either pluck out your eye or cut off your hand. In **Matthew 11:6** says, “Blessed is he who does not take offense at me.” In **Matthew 13:57** says at Nazareth, His home town, it says, “they took offense at Him.” In **Matthew 15:12** the disciples tell Jesus that the Pharisees were offended by what He said. In **Matthew 17:27** Jesus paid taxes so **not to offend** the Romans. **Matthew 18:6** talks about causing ‘little ones’ to stumble or to be offended. In **Matthew 18:8-9** goes back to the hand and the foot and the eye causing someone to stumble. In **Matthew 24:10** many will “fall away” or be “offended” because of Jesus. **Matthew 26:31** Jesus tells His disciples that they will “fall away” because of Him ... fulfilling Scripture. In **Matthew 26:33** Peter said, “Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.” Mark uses this 8 times and Luke uses it only two times. In **John 6:61** at Jesus’ hard teaching, some people fell away. Jesus says to His disciples in **John 6:29**, “You do not want to leave also, do you?” In **John 16:1** Jesus’ warnings were told to keep people from stumbling. He warned them that *something was coming*. In **1 Corinthians 8:13** eating meat may cause some to stumble. There are really a lot of places where this word is found. In **2 Corinthians 11:29**, Paul feels concern for those who are falling or stumbling and says, “Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?” A “skandalon” is a movable stick, or trigger or trap or snare. It’s an impediment that causes stumbling.

In **Matthew 13:41** Jesus says, “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,...”. In **Matthew 16:23** Peter is called Satan, a stumbling block to Jesus not setting his mind of God’s interests, but on man’s interests. In **Matthew 18:17** it talks about the world’s stumbling blocks. **Romans 9:33** quoting **Isaiah 8:14**, “when righteousness is not pursued by faith, they miss who Jesus is and stumble over the Stumbling-stone. He becomes a rock of offense. In **Romans 11:9** Paul quotes from **Psalms 69:22** where David says, “MAY THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM. MAY THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS CONTINUALLY.” God gave them a spirit of stupor: eyes and ears that do not see or hear and their table became a snare, a trap and a stumbling-block and a retribution. The Jews falling away opens a door for the gentiles. In **Romans 14:13** determine not to put an obstacle or a stumbling-block in a brother’s way. In **Romans 16:17** Paul says, “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.” In **1 Corinthians 1:23** Christ crucified is a stumbling-block for people, and it’s foolishness for some. Paul says, “But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” In **Galatians 5:11** Paul says, circumcision is a stumbling block to the Gentiles. “But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.” **1 Peter 2:8** talks about stumbling because of disobedience. In **1 John 2:10** love removes the stumbling stone.

There are so many places where this idea of stumbling or falling is found. The reason I give you all these is to show you that when He talks about people who fall away on account of the Word of God, He is talking about a very serious condition that all of us are prone to. The nature of falling away seems closely tied to negative consequences ... consequences associated with knowing Jesus! These consequences can extend to death, persecution, ridicule, being ostracized, loss of financial stability and being prevented from social upward mobility. For many, to be connected to Jesus was not a plus. It carried huge risk and when confronted with those risks, many caved and stumbled over Jesus.

I’m reading a book called “Influence” and it’s interesting that social proof ... people taking cues from their social environment to determine their behavior. How much looking around at your “*fellow crowd members*” determines your reaction to Jesus? We tend to act like others around us. For those who accepted persecution, a new social paradigm was set which attached people to following Jesus. But the scale had to be tipped before the Kingdom grew. Commitment begets commitment. Seeing people living out their faith encourages us; it gives us courage to overcome our personal objections. Jesus was a great social scientist. He knew human behavior!

In other words, what we’re saying here is that in those earliest days when people were being persecuted, *I believe more people were stumbling over Jesus*; but as the momentum began to switch and *more and more people began to be persecuted and accept that persecution, and showed their commitment to Jesus, the easier it was for other people to get on that and put their faith in Jesus.*

Well, the third kind of person is the one among the thorns. Matthew, Mark and Luke all add something to this picture. *Matthew* only says that *the seed fell among the thorns choking out the seed*. Implied is the plant produced by the seed. *Mark* says something similar but *adds that it is the word that is choked*. *Luke* adds that *the thorns grew up with the seed and choked it*. So we get the picture of them growing together but Luke also adds *as they go on their way, the choking begins*.

Thorns are identified in **Matthew 13:22** as *the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth*. *Mark* identifies them as the *worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things that enter in*. *Luke simply says worries, and riches and pleasures of this life*.

The outcomes are that Matthew says that *the word becomes unfruitful*. *Mark* says *the word becomes unfruitful and Luke says it brings no fruit to maturity*. All these need to be compared.

The action of choking is *sumpnigo* {συμπνιγω}. It means to choke utterly, to press round, to throng so as to almost suffocate them. It is only found in this context. There is no other place where this word is found. Weeds or thorns generally compete for nutrients in the soil. Perhaps because they outnumber the plants, they choke off the supply that gives life. *The life energy given by Jesus is diverted to other things*. We use the energy He gives us for 'other things'. This choking is not immediate; it occurs over time. As they go on their way, or pursue the journey on which they have entered, *then* worries and riches and pleasures happen.

In **Matthew 13:22** we see the worry of the world ... the word "worry" here is *merimnao* (μεριμνάω) and it means anxiety, concerns, worries or worry issues ... it is used in this context. It is also found in **Luke 21:34**, be on your guard so that your hearts will not be weighed down with dissipations and drunkenness and the *worries* of this life, and that day will come on you suddenly like a trap. The idea of dissipation is the idea of giddiness and headache caused by drinking wine to excess. Jesus is saying basically don't get drunk and have a hangover. Paul carried this anxiety for all the churches he says, in **2 Cor. 11:28**. Peter tells us to cast all our anxiety on Him because He cares for us. So the world is the culprit. Its influences crowd in and take our attention off of what is important.

The word "world" here is "aion" (αἰών) it's not the word cosmos. It is an age or a time, that which is presently happening. **Matthew 12:32** says that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this "age" nor in the "one" to come. There are a number of places where this idea of ages is used. But all ages of human existence carry with it "in the moment" or "in real time". The challenges of survival can breed anxiety and worry. The second culprit here, or the second weed, is deceitfulness of wealth or riches. The old self is corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit in **Ephesians 4:22**. **Colossians 2:8** says that we can be taken captive by philosophy and empty deception. Again, there is this idea of deception or deceit that we must understand; Satan's tool is deceit, and wealth is one of the ways that he captures us in this deception. **2 Thessalonians 2:10** says that those who are vulnerable to the deception of wickedness are those who do not love the truth. Then in **Hebrews 3:13** the deceitfulness of sin hardens but daily encouragement protects us from this.

2 Peter 2:13 speaks of those who revel in their deceptions. But specifically here, it is the *riches* that deceive ... *abundance of external possessions*. God has riches with which we are blessed. **Romans 2:4** speaks of the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience which leads us to repentance. **Romans 9:23** speaks of the riches of His glory. **Romans 11:12** The failure of the Jews resulted in the riches for the world, or for the Gentiles. **Romans 11:33** speak of the riches of the wisdom of the knowledge of God. In **2 Corinthians 8:2** Paul says it was out of their great poverty that flowed great riches into their lives. **Ephesians 1:7** speaks of the riches of God's grace and **Ephesians 1:18** mentions the riches of the glory of His inheritance and the saints. All of these places where riches are mentioned, and there are so many that I cannot give all of them to you today, cause us sometimes when we are presented with worldly riches, that we come to devalue the *true* riches that God is giving us in Christ.

Mark adds not only the riches but he adds 'the desire for other things' ... literally 'about' the other things' desires. In other words, there are not only riches but there are 'other things' that we desire. So the idea of desire here is a common word for desire, it means cravings, and it's used in various places to talk about the lust and the cravings of the heart. So, caught up in our lives is this idea of the *things that we long for; things that we crave*, and if those things are not primarily the Kingdom of God, the wisdom of God and the righteousness of God and the goodness of God, then we are going to be deceived by those things and we're going to fall away. So the desire for other things would be for *those things not in conformity with the will of God*.

Luke 8:14 uses the idea of the pleasures of life. Here, this phrase is akin to **Titus 3:3** talking about a person who enslaved to various pleasures. **James 4:1** speaks on the source of conflicts and quarrels are pleasures that wage war in your members. In **James 4:3** we do not receive what we ask for because we ask for because we simply want to spend it on our own pleasures. **2 Peter 2:13** talks of those who love or count it pleasure to revel in the daytime; reveling in their deception.

All in all, the thorns that choke out the word are pernicious. These are no ordinary thorns. These are mean, entangling, piercing and although we normally avoid thorns because they are painful, we seem drawn to these even though they suck the very life out of us. The deception is quite complete like a moth drawn to the burning flame. We worry ourselves to death, spend ourselves to death, party ourselves to death. Jesus seems to perfectly describe the modern society in these words. Jesus can say so much in so few words.

The result of the thorns is 'unfruitfulness' used with Matthew and Mark. Luke says it brings no fruit to maturity. It means to be a "bearer to completion", to ripen fruit, to bring fruit to perfection. It is only used here figuratively. To be fruitless means to be barren and it is a word that is used 56 times, mostly in Matthew and Luke. So, one of the things that is clear from the Scripture is that God wants people to bear fruit.

I'll just give you a couple of examples of this.

Matthew 3:8 says that we are to *bear fruit in keeping with repentance*. In **Matthew 3:10** *if you don't bear good fruit you'll be cut down*. Of course the **John 15** passage where it talks about *branches that do not bear fruit will be cut off and thrown into the fire*. Jesus is looking for fruit that will last.

God is so desperate or desirous for fruit that He makes it clear. *It is essential in our relationship with Him*. In fact, **it is the evidence of our relationship with Him**. *Jesus inspects fruit*. He expects fruit. He produces fruit. The person who does not produce the fruit of the Kingdom is worthless ... **not inherently** but *practically so*.

The things listed that rob us of fruit are to be feared and cleared out of our life. They rob us of our blessing. They choke out the life source of Jesus' nourishment. They make it impossible to experience the full and abundant life that He desires for us. It is critical to remove the thorns a. s. a. p.

Well, we're going to stop right there. We're not going to talk about the good soil today. We'll talk about that next time. But we'll stop here because that's just enough for today.

We have gotten through three of the different kinds of soil that are talked about and you have gotten a lot of information and I hope you will take time to dig deeply into it so that you may understand the Mind of Christ.

Please feel free to go to our website <https://www.centalsarasota.org/> where you will find all kinds of things there for your listening enjoyment. Until next time, take care and God bless.