

## THE CARES OF THE WORLD

Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23

### I. INTRODUCTION

A. This morning we are continuing our study of the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. This parable was designed by God to teach us about the different responses men would have in this present age to Christ and His kingdom. The message of the kingdom of heaven is merely the gospel of Christ. It is all about Christ, the King, His death, His resurrection, His sovereign reign over the hearts of men and His yet future kingdom to be established on this earth at the second advent of Christ. When the word of the kingdom or the word of God is proclaimed, there are always four responses to it.

B. The Parable of the Sower emphasizes four different kinds of soils or hearts the gospel of Christ may fall on. The condition of the soil or heart determines what will happen when the seed of the word of the kingdom falls into it. Only the last soil, the good ground, is the true Christian because this person brings forth fruit or good works to prove, demonstrate or give evidence of true saving faith (James 2:26).

***James 2:26: For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.***

C. The Parable of the Sower deals with the subject of salvation and not sanctification. The thrust of this parable is not on Christian living per se but upon the reality of a living, vital, saving faith in Christ. Three out of four of these soils represent a non-Christian. There are three kinds of hearts which make some kind of response to Christ but are not genuinely saved. **NOTE:** It has become popular in our day to interpret the stony ground hearers and the thorny ground hearers as carnal Christians and the fourth ground, the good ground, as a Christian that acknowledges the Lordship of Christ and is Spirit-filled. We are definitely told that the wayside hearer is unsaved (Luke 8:12). Luke also says that the stony ground hearers are unsaved (Luke 8:13). However, in none of the Gospel accounts is it clearly stated that the thorny ground hearers were lost but the implication is that the thorny ground hearers brought forth no real, lasting spiritual fruit or works. Therefore, because a person cannot be saved without the evidence of good works, it is logical to conclude that the stony ground hearers were also unsaved. Works are important! Not to save but to \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation. Not to keep us saved but because we are saved (Eph. 2:10). The context of the three Gospel accounts, and the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints do not permit a carnal Christian interpretation of this parable. **NOTE:** There is a Biblical teaching about the loss of rewards in heaven for rebellious Christians on earth, but I am afraid that many people, who are professing Christians and deep in sin, often rationalize their sinful condition by saying, “Well, I know I am doing wrong, but I am saved, and even though I continue in my sin I will just lose some rewards in heaven.” This kind of thinking is a misunderstanding of salvation and a perversion of the doctrine of eternal security. The Bible says that sexually immoral persons, covetous, idolaters, murderers, sorcerers, liars, fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, drunkards, thieves and swindlers will have no part with Christ and His kingdom (I Cor. 6:9, 10; Eph 5:5, 6; 1 Cor. 6:11). This parable deals with professing Christians who have not changed habit patterns after their supposed conversion to Christ. It is not a few rewards that are at stake but the destiny of one’s soul!

***I Cor. 6:9, 10: Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.***

***Eph 5:5, 6: For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.***

***I Cor. 6:11: And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.***

## II. THE WAYSIDE HEARER 13:19

A. The wayside hearers are those who hear the message of Christ and His kingdom but because they are so hardened by sin, they immediately reject the truth. They do not understand the spiritual meaning of the word of the kingdom because sin and Satan has blinded them to any spiritual truth. Thoughts of Christ, the King, His kingdom are repugnant and repulsive to the wayside hearers. They think the gospel is foolish and old fashioned, and they cannot be bothered to pursue the subject any further. They see no relevance to Christ and feel no need for a Savior. They are very self-satisfied and smug in their secular living. With this attitude, the Devil comes along and snatches the truth of Christ out of the wayside hearers' hearts.

B. The condition of the wayside hearers is obvious. They were lost and they stayed lost because there was no soil, good or bad, for the seed of the gospel to fall upon and take root.

C. The wayside hearers fell victim to the Devil. Satan is an archenemy of the gospel and those who harden themselves to the truth of Christ align themselves with the Devil and his kingdom of darkness.

## III. THE STONY ROCK HEARERS 13:20, 21

A. The stony rock hearers are those who hear the message of Christ and His kingdom, and at first get all excited about it, but when persecutions and tribulations come because the world hates the word of the kingdom, they stumble, withdraw and fall away from the true Christian faith.

B. The stony rock hearers have some kind of understanding of Christ and apparently the seed of the word germinates but it takes no root, for under this thin, shallow soil is bedrock. The stony rock hearers will hear the gospel, make some kind of response to it and get all enthused, excited and thrilled about it but with the passing of time the persecutions and tribulations of the Christian life will cause them to turn away from Christ. They had initial excitement but the word never took root. Underneath all the externals of Christianity was really a hardened heart to Christ, and it took trials, tribulations and persecutions to show that these persons were really never saved (I Timothy 4:1).

***I Timothy 4:1: But the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.***

C. The stony rock hearers have a religious experience but not the new birth that comes from God. They have an emotional response to Christ but no real understanding or commitment to Christ. Their profession of faith in Christ is temporary, shallow, filled with sham and is phony. They have a surface Christianity but no reality. When the stony rock hearers realize that there is a price to pay and a sacrifice to make to be a follower of Christ, they are not willing to place themselves under the Lordship of Christ and pay the price to follow Jesus Christ.

D. This parable tells us that there is a faith in Christ that is not true saving faith. A person may give intellectual assent to Christ and even have a deep emotional, religious experience and never be really saved. Why? Because he never earnestly and honestly received Christ or placed himself under the Lordship of Christ.

E. The stony rock hearers fell victim to the flesh. The flesh is another enemy of the gospel and those false hearers only received the word in the zeal of the flesh. Their profession of faith was generated by the flesh and not by the Spirit of God.

#### IV. THE THORNY GROUND HEARERS 13:22

A. The thorny ground hearer is one who hears the message of Christ and His kingdom and seems to accept the truth, but by and by he gets taken up with the cares of the world and loses all interest in spiritual things. In this case, the seed of the word of God seemed to take root and seemed to bring forth some kind of fruit. The thorny ground hearer does not produce spiritual good works brought about by the Holy Spirit. He “becomes unfruitful” and brings no fruit “to perfection or maturity” (Luke 8:14).

***Luke 8:14: . . . and bring no fruit to maturity.***

B. No real fruit ever came out of the thorny ground hearers’ profession of faith in Christ. There were some works that showed up after his profession of faith but they were not spiritual works. They were works of the flesh. They were religious works but not works produced by true saving faith. NOTE: A thorny ground hearer has the externals of religious - church membership, church attendance, baptism, an occasional humanitarian work - but he has no internal reality of Christ. Time, exposure to the world and unfruitfulness will finally prove this person to be a rejecter of Christ.

C. There are three things that finally get to the thorny ground hearer - the cares of the world, deceitfulness of riches, and Luke and Mark name the lust of pleasure (Luke 8:14; Mark 4:20). These three things slowly choke off or suffocate any reality of Christ. Anxiety, riches and pleasure choke out the word of the kingdom. NOTE: The thorny ground hearer may give some outward signs of really being saved, but when he finally has to make a choice between the world and the Lordship of Christ, he takes the world.

D. The “cares of the world” are literally translated “the anxieties of this age.” There are many cares, anxieties and frustrations of life because we live in this present age. Why? Because the god of this age is Satan himself (II Cor. 4:3, 4). In God’s sovereign purpose, Satan has been permitted to exercise a great measure of authority and power

throughout the duration of this age. This present age we live in is basically controlled by Satan and his forces. This age, therefore, is and will be basically evil in nature but the Christian has been positionally delivered from this present evil world and given a place in Christ's future kingdom where He shall reign supreme (Gal. 1:4). NOTE: The Devil is a materialist; he is anti-God, anti-Christ and anti-supernatural. The Devil lures people to put all their energies into the physical world and not on the eternal future. The Devil does all he can to destroy man's faith in God through Christ. Satan's whole system is opposed to the gospel of Christ, and he works night and day to get men to trust in themselves and not in the Living God. Satan is a humanist who gets people to exalt men and to dethrone God. He fans man's ego, pride and vanity, puffing men up so as to make man think that he is his own god. NOTE: We can readily see, then, that the cares of this age are not just worry, trouble and anxiety over making a living. It is an entire spirit that characterizes this present age - worry, pressure, the drive of ambition for wealth, success, prosperity and power. Satan gets man to misplace his sense of values so as to make money, power and prestige more important than serving the Living God. The Devil is a master at getting people "uptight" because they become obsessed with the cares of this life. They pursue the material goals of this age with all their energies and forget that God has anything to do with this world. It is a common thing for men to profess Christ and then later throw it all over for the cares of this world (II Tim. 4:10). NOTE: Christians are warned and exhorted not to conform to this world system (Romans 12:1, 2; Titus 2:11-13). Furthermore, believers are specifically told that Satan and his controlling system is the main adversary of the Christian in this age (Eph. 6:12). NOTE: How then is a true Christian to fight the lures of the world? How is he to prove he is a true believer? By trusting God (I Peter 5:7; Matthew 6:34).

***II Cor. 4:3, 4: And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world (age) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, which is the image of God.***

***Gal. 1:4: Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.***

***II Timothy 4:10: For Demas, having loved this present world (age) has departed from me and gone to Thessalonica . . .***

***Romans 12:1, 2: I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world (age), but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.***

***Titus 2:11-13: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.***

***Eph. 6:12: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces (forces of the age) of darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.***

***I Peter 5:7: Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.***

***Matthew 6:34: Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.***

E. Then there is the deceitfulness of riches that cause many to give up their profession of faith. The word “deceit” means that which gives a false impression. Riches can beguile, trick, delude, fool and cheat a person about the true meaning of life which is really found in the spiritual realm. ILLUSTRATION: Mr. and Mrs. America

ILLUSTRATION: This depicts the typical American business man and his wife. They have become too occupied with “things” to give much serious thought to Christ and His Kingdom. It is not that they are shallow or that they are uninterested, but they do not have time to seriously think about Christ because they are too busy acquiring the “finer things of life.” They are trying to keep up with the Joneses (that means buying things you don’t need with money you don’t have to impress people you don’t like). They want a color TV and a swimming pool and a fine home and two beautiful cars and a wide social life. The result is that they have no time to think about the Word, no time to meditate on it and no time to really receive it.

F. No matter what a person’s profession of Christ might be, if there is not true saving faith, the deceitfulness of riches will one day prove that profession of Christ to be false and not genuine. This is very frightening, for I believe that this is the condition of many professing Christians. They want riches and Christ but Christ says this is impossible (Matthew 6:24). While it is impossible to have riches and Christ, it is possible to have Christ and riches. There will always be some Christians with riches but they are to have a spiritual attitude towards their riches. There is nothing wrong with having money as long as you are not motivated by money. Christ must be given first place and money not pursued as the passion of one’s life (I Timothy 6:17-19). NOTE: How should a Christian act towards riches that he might not be lured away by the deceitfulness of riches? How can the Christian prove he is a true child of God? By seeking Christ first (Matthew 6:33).

***Matthew 6:24: No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other, You cannot serve God and mammon (riches).***

***I Timothy 6:17-19: Instruct those who are rich in this present world (age) not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.***

***Matthew 6:33: But seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.***

G. Luke in his Gospel tells us of another lure of the world to get professing Christians to turn from the faith – the lust of pleasure (Luke 8:14). Pleasure here means the gratification of sinful desires and a giving in to the natural impulses of life. A person has no control over his or her sinful desires and only seeks for self-gratification. People who give in to the sinful pleasures of life live a very selfish and self-centered existence. NOTE: Man by nature wants to be free from all restraints in life, and the Devil has deluded man into thinking that freedom or independence from God is the real answer to life. Freedom is distorted, twisted and corrupted by Satan and the evil thoughts of men. Men want freedom to do what they want - to drink as much booze as they desire, to take

as much dope as they crave, to sleep with whom they please, to rebel at all authority, to be undisciplined, and to be rid of all responsibilities. The Devil, using the lures of the world, tells men and women that this is real freedom but it is not freedom, it is slavery and bondage to sin. NOTE: For pleasure, men will sell their souls to the Devil and his wicked kingdom of darkness.

H. How can a true Christian keep from yielding to the pleasures of this life? How can he demonstrate the reality of his Christian faith? He can walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). He can obey the command not to love the world (I John 2:15-17). NOTE: A true Christian can flirt with the world system and can fall to the lures of the Devil, but the Christian cannot be happy in the world \_\_\_\_\_. He cannot continually pursue the world's goals or constantly go after \_\_\_\_\_ philosophy \_\_\_\_\_, nor can he habitually accept the morals of the world.

I. The thorny ground hearer fell victim to the world system just as the wayside hearer fell victim to the Devil and the stony rock hearer gave way to the flesh. The thorny ground hearer was not willing to pay the price of following Christ. This present age is hostile to Christ and His kingdom, and most people conform to this age rather than surrender to the Lordship of Christ.

## V. CONCLUSION

A. Are you saved? Are you a rank rejecter of Christ? If you are, the Devil has stolen the Word out of your heart. Ask God to help you understand the truth.

B. Are you a person that once was all excited about Christ but lost that excitement and cast over the faith because you could not stand the sting of rejection and the loneliness of persecution that comes to a follower of Christ? If you are, God can give you the real thing if you ask Him to save you.

C. Are you a respectable church member but up to your ears in the world system? If you are, God can deliver you out of the world and teach you to surrender to the Lordship of Christ.

D. Do not let anything in this world keep you from knowing that you are saved! The eternal destiny of your soul is a stake!