

02 – PROTECTING THE SEED

Mark 4:14-20 – “The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.”

- ✓ In this passage, we're introduced to four kinds of ground; three bad and one good! What made them differ? (They *all* heard the Word! And, when it came down to it, *most* of them received it.) So, why didn't the first 3 produce? **They heard the Word and then, for some reason, they lost it!** Satan was able to steal the Word out of their heart, and without the “seed” planted, there can be no harvest!
- ✓ Now, they all fell for different things! As I said last week, Satan has five things he'll use to get the Word out of your heart! And it doesn't matter to him, which one you fall for! As long as he can get the Word out! (That's what he's after!) So, the bad ground was bad, because it lost the Word! Let's dig into this.

1.) By the Wayside

*Matt. 13:19 – “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and **understandeth it not**, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”*

- ✓ Why did this group lose the Word? They never understood it.

- ✓ Think about that! If I'm preaching a message, and I don't make it understandable, then Satan can just walk by and pull that Word out of your heart. (If that's true, then what does that make my job as the preacher? To make the Word so simple a child could understand it.) If I do my job properly, and you understand the Word, then Satan can't just walk off with it. (He'll have to work harder to get it out of your heart. Like I said, he's got 5 tools to work with.)

2.) Stony Ground

*Mark 4:16-17 – “And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when **affliction** or **persecution** arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.”*

- ✓ Notice what happened. They heard the Word and got excited about it. But the Word never got “rooted” in their hearts. They weren't good Bereans. They didn't go back to the Word, to see the Truth for themselves. They just believed it because the preacher said it. So, they believed for a while. Then, the devil came by with his first two tools – affliction and persecution.
- ◆ Affliction: This refers to circumstances that come, that make it seem like the Word's not true!
- ✓ For example, suppose I preach on healing. Chances are really good that, before the week is out, half the church will have the flu. Why? Satan wants you to get offended, pull that Word out of your heart, and say, “That preacher said Jesus heals today, and here I am sick! Well, I guess *that's* not true!” (*Toss*.) You just uprooted the seed. And without the seed planted, there can be no harvest.)
- ◆ Persecution: This is the hostile opposition of people! This could be your mother-in-law, or your friends, saying, “What on earth are you doing, hanging around with that crazy bunch down at that church? What's *wrong* with you?” And the pressure gets so bad that you say, “It's not worth it!”

- ✓ When Satan brought “affliction”, you decided the Word **wasn’t true**, and you threw it away. When people put pressure on you (persecution), you decided following the Word **wasn’t worth it**. You had different *reasons*, but in both cases, you unhooked. You uprooted the seed. And without the seed planted, there can be no harvest.

(3) Thorny Ground

Mark 4:18-19 – “And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the Word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, **choke the Word**, and it becometh unfruitful.”

- ✓ Notice Satan’s strategy here. If he can’t get you to deny the Truth of the Word, and if he can’t make you say the Word’s not worth it – then he’ll try to make you too busy for it! There are three specific tools he uses to “choke the Word” out of your life.

◆ The Cares of This World: The *worries* and *responsibilities* of life.

- ✓ “Study the Bible? Go to church? Are you kidding? I don’t have time for that! I have a *job*, and a *family*, and *responsibilities*! Bills don’t pay themselves, you know! And my family comes first! I’d *like* to go to church, but the Word will just have to wait!”

◆ The Deceitfulness of Riches: This is (basically) running after riches!

- ✓ It’s not *having* money – it’s *chasing* money that’s the problem. The goal of life is not to work hard, so you can be the richest guy in the graveyard. The quest to be rich can choke the Word out of your life.

◆ The Lusts of Other Things: “Lust” refers to “any strong desire”.

- ✓ This can be *anything* in life that you put before the Word. (Anything that eats up your “Word-time” or your “church-time”). There’s nothing wrong with enjoying life, but the Word needs to come first.
- ✓ Those five things are all Satan’s got! If you plant the Word in your

heart, and you don’t let any of those five things steal the Word, then the Word *will* produce in your life!

(4) Good Ground

Luke 8:15 (KJV) – “Those on the good ground are those who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word **keep it** ...”

- ✓ Let me add one word, without doing any violence to the Scriptures. “They keep it (**planted**).” Other translations say they “hold on to it tightly” (Amp, EHV), or they “cling to it” (EXB, NET).
- ✓ The Message says, “... they seize the Word, and hold on no matter what!” Through all five of Satan’s tactics, they don’t let go of the Word. They keep it planted, and they produce. I’ll say it again. If you’ll do what’s necessary to not let Satan offend you, or break your focus, then harvest is sure!

Why the Different Levels of Production?

- ✓ Some produced 30, some 60, and some 100. Why the different levels of production within the good ground?

Mark 4:24 (Amp) – “The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of power and knowledge] that comes back to you.”

Another Parable

Mark 4:30-32 – “And he said, whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, **at the time you sow it in the earth, it is less than all the seeds that be in the earth** ...”

- ✓ You’ll see this sometimes, as a pastor. Someone comes in to see you. They just got back from the doctor, and they got a horrible report. (They were given three months to live.) As a Pastor, I give them the most powerful tool I have. The Word. (1 Pet. 2:24)

- ✓ They don't necessarily say it out loud, but sometimes they look at you like: "A verse? I just told you I'm dying, and you give me ... a verse? What's a verse going to do?"
- ✓ It looks so small beside that mountain of sickness, but that's what Jesus said. *"It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, at the time you sow it in the earth, it is less than all the seeds that be in the earth. But when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater ..."* And, when the Word on the inside, gets stronger than the sickness on the outside, the sickness drops off.

Mark 4:33 – *"And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it ... and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."*

- ✓ So, He's preached this all day. He *told* the parable. He *explained* it. He told "many" supporting parables. Then, when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples. He's preached this all day!

Mark 4:35-38 – *"And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, let us pass over unto the other side. (That was the Word of God, and there was power in it!) And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, (affliction for the Word's sake) and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, master, carest thou not that we perish?"*

- ✓ He's just preached all day that the cares of the world choke the Word, and they wake Him up and say, "Don't you care?"

v. 39 – *"And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, peace, be still. ... And he said unto them, why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"*

- ✓ Why could He expect them to have faith? They'd heard the Word. But they let the cares of this world choke the Word. And it became unfruitful!